

PATRIOT MILITIAMAN IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION 1775–82



ED GILBERT & CATHERINE GILBERT ILLUSTRATED BY STEVE NOON

WARRIOR 176

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Series editor Marcus Cowper

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The Southern Campaign was once widely acknowledged as decisive. The “tree of liberty” had its roots in colonial grievances, and, as its highest branches, the Southern Campaign battles. More actions were fought in South Carolina than in any other colony. (NARA)

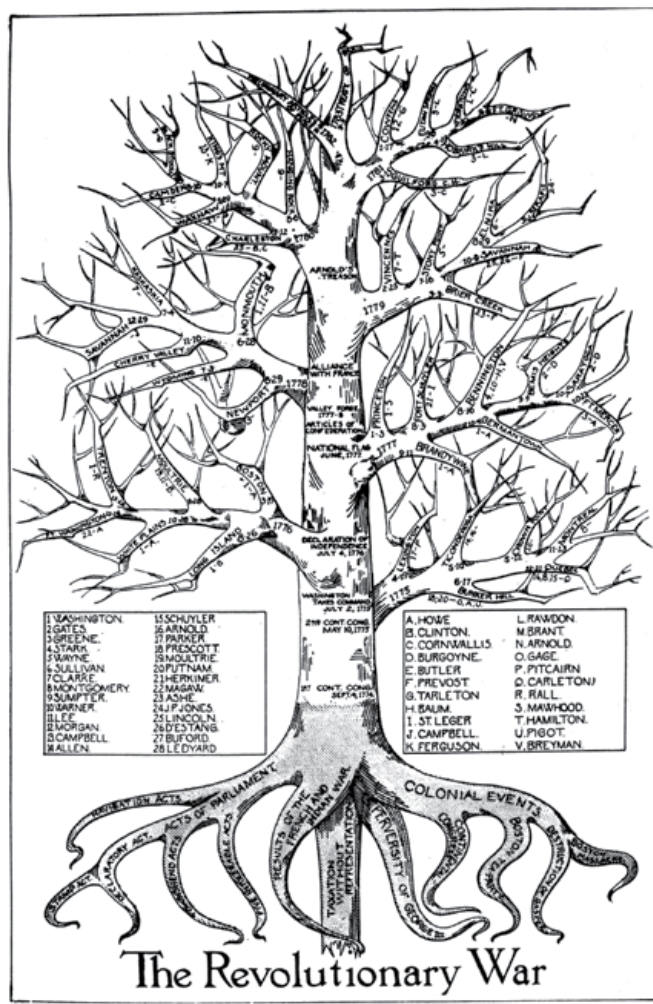
INTRODUCTION

“When war begins, then Hell opens.” English proverb

Americans have a romanticized view of the militia’s role in the War for Independence. American generals of the era knew that disciplined Regulars would be necessary to win independence, and on the whole the militia played

a relatively minor role. The militia’s inability to stand in the face of a resolute British attack often brought disaster upon their companions of the Continental Line. In 1776 George Washington said “if I was called upon to declare upon Oath, whether the Militia have been most serviceable or hurtful upon the whole, I should subscribe to the latter.”

The purpose of the Whig militia was the traditional role of local defense against raids and local offensives by the British and their Indian allies. The Patriots – those rebelling against the Crown – more commonly called themselves Whigs; see glossary. The period-appropriate term Indian is used here, as opposed to “Native American.” Another common role of militia was to keep their Tory neighbors under control. Nowhere was this function more important than in the Delmarva Peninsula east of Chesapeake Bay shared by Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. The “breadbasket of the Revolution” supplied food moved by coastal vessels for Patriot armies to the north and south. The Royal Navy often controlled the Bay, intercepting water traffic and raiding at will. Militia often proved incapable of opposing even small landing parties.





Paintings like *The First Blow for Liberty* by A.H. Ritchie color modern impressions of the militia. New England "minutemen" probably wore the clothing of townsmen and affluent farmers. (NARA)

Captain Henry Hooper of the Dorchester County (Maryland) Militia mustered his company to oppose a landing party, and found a British brig and two sloops anchored off Vienna. His company had only 12 firearms among them. Hooper was presented with an ultimatum; he could let the British purchase supplies, or he could resist and the British would seize the supplies and burn the town. He chose the former. Called to account for his actions, he was cleared of charges.

The British retreat from Concord and Lexington fostered a persistent myth that the British fought from formations in the open. The retreat was of necessity road bound, but the British Army was experienced in frontier warfare. (NARA)



In sharp contrast the militia played a major role in thwarting the British Southern Strategy in Georgia and the Carolinas. From 1779 onward the fate of the new nation hinged upon the success or failure of untrained militiamen.

At the beginning of the Revolution the hotbed of resistance was New England and Virginia. In the South, the desire for independence was led by the affluent traders and plantation owners of the coastal regions. The people of the back-country had more pressing issues: surviving harsh winters and Indian raids. Yet the South was strategically important. Wealthy Charleston was the fourth-largest port in America, and a major hub of trade in rice and indigo. New England was fighting the revolution, the middle colonies were feeding the rebel troops, and the South was funding the war.

After General Burgoyne's disastrous defeat at Saratoga in late 1777 (see Campaign 67: *Saratoga 1777*, Brendan Morrissey, Osprey Publishing: Oxford, 2000) encouraged French intervention, Loyalist exiles in London convinced the government that Crown sentiment was strong in the South. Georgia and South Carolina could be quickly subdued, and the other colonies "rolled up" from the south. With control of the sea, the British moved their army south, and in 1778 captured several ports to serve as bases for subjugation of the South.

The stage was set for two and a half years of savage warfare in which the back-country militias conducted actions in which they excelled: small battles, raids, ambushes, and assassination. The eventual collapse of the Southern Strategy would drive Cornwallis north to pyrrhic victory at Guilford Courthouse (see Campaign 109: *Guilford Courthouse 1781*, Angus Konstam, Osprey Publishing: Oxford, 2002), and encirclement and defeat at Yorktown (see Campaign 47: *Yorktown 1781*, Brendan Morrissey, Osprey Publishing: London, 1997).

CHRONOLOGY OF THE WAR IN THE SOUTH

1764–71	Resentment grows in the back-country over unfair taxation, embezzlement by Crown officials, and lack of legislative representation and courts of law.
1767–69	The War of the Regulation. Vigilante groups, formed to counter a reign of crime, evolve into revolt against the colonial government, a prelude to the War of Independence.
1775	Rebels seize Crown ships and facilities. Georgia and South Carolina militia clash with British Regulars. In November the British fort at Ninety-Six is briefly besieged.
December 8–30, 1775	The Snow Campaign first pits Patriot against Tory militias.
June 21–29, 1776	Charleston, SC. A botched British attack fails to reduce Fort Sullivan. Skirmishes between Patriot militia and British allies grow in number and intensity.
January 1777 to December 1778	Charleston, SC. The Crown Governor is driven out, and Tory militias cowed. Britain concentrates on subduing New England.
December 1778	Georgia. A British army lands to implement the Southern Strategy, and captures Savannah on December 29.
June 20, 1779	Stono Ferry, SC. The British defeat a larger force of

	Continental and militia. Patriot forces retreat into Charleston.
September 24 to October 19, 1779	Savannah, GA. A Franco-American force besieges British-occupied Savannah. The French commander orders a hasty assault. The repulse is the bloodiest battle of the entire war.
April 1	The British invest Charleston. Naval and land skirmishes occur through broad areas of the South.
April 14	Monck's Corner, SC. Lieutenant-Colonel Banastre Tarleton defeats a Patriot force to emerge as one of the most ruthless and feared British leaders.
May 12	Charleston falls, and quickly becomes a haven for local Tories.
May 29	The Waxhaws, SC. Tarleton defeats Continental and South Carolina militia. The British and Tories slaughter surrendered Patriots. Tarleton is acquitted in a court martial, but "Tarleton's Quarter" becomes a Patriot rallying cry.
June 8 to July 12	The Presbyterian Rebellion. Captain Christian Huck of Tarleton's Legion begins a reign of terror and murder, burning Presbyterian "sedition houses." The war now is a religious conflict.
June 20	Ramseur's Mill, NC. A powerful Patriot force of NC and SC militia surprises the poorly armed Loyalists with heavy loss of life.
August 6	Hanging Rock, SC. Colonel Thomas Sumter wins a hard-fought battle. In England many had assumed that a negotiated peace with the Americans was possible; the battle ends that sentiment.
August 16	Camden, SC. A Patriot army under General Horatio Gates is decisively defeated. The militia now carries the entire weight of the rebel hopes.
August 18	Musgrove's Mill, SC. Militia decisively defeats a powerful Tory force, but Gates' defeat forces the militia to abandon plans to capture the fortress at Ninety-Six. Cornwallis assigns Tarleton and Patrick Ferguson to subdue the back-country and recruit Tory militia.
October 7	King's Mountain, SC. Ferguson is trapped, and a major part of Cornwallis's army destroyed.
November 20	Blackstock's Plantation, SC. Tarleton corners Sumter's force of militia and State troops. Tarleton is decisively defeated.
January 17, 1781	Cowpens, SC. Tarleton falls upon Patriot forces under General Daniel Morgan, and is decisively defeated. Nearly 1,000 of Cornwallis's best troops are lost.
February 1-14	The "Race for the Dan," NC. Cornwallis pursues Morgan toward Virginia. Patriot forces escape across the rain-swollen Dan River.
February 17 to March 3	Cornwallis strives to reconstitute his army, but Patriot activities thwart his plans.
March 15	Guilford Courthouse, NC. Greene finally faces Cornwallis in open battle. Cornwallis wins a tactical victory, but his army is gutted.
April 5 to June 5	South Carolina. Greene's army returns and with the local partisans systematically reduces British posts.

April 25	Wilmington, NC. Cornwallis begins marching his battered army toward Virginia.
May 22 to June 19	Ninety-Six, SC. The fort withstands a Patriot siege, but the British abandon the strategic fort and retreat into Charleston.
June	North and South Carolina, Georgia. Tory and Patriot militias settle old scores in savage skirmishes and battles. Raids and battles continue between settlers and Indian allies of the British.
September 8	Eutaw Springs, SC. Greene attacks the British and suffers a tactical defeat, but the British have suffered losses they cannot replace.
November 18, 1781 to December 17, 1782	The British evacuate large bases at Wilmington, Savannah, and Charleston, SC. The Patriot militias turn to subduing the Cherokee.
December 1783	Paris, France. A treaty formally ends the war.

THE MILITIA SYSTEM

The myth of “every man a soldier” arose early in American history and, despite complaints dating to colonial times, remained strong into the twentieth century.

The South Carolina Colony charter of 1663 authorized the Lords Proprietors to raise militia for defense, necessary in an era of colonial wars and state-sponsored piracy. The Lords Proprietors were a consortium of nobles granted a Crown Charter to fund, govern, and profit from a colony as a private business venture and to raise militia for defense, necessary in an era of colonial wars and state-sponsored piracy. In 1671 the Grand Council

Men of the reserve “minute service” might be called up at short notice and fight in their “town” clothes. The rifleman at left is armed with a 1740 model .50-caliber “transition” rifle, an unusually large caliber, and carries a belt knife. The man at right is armed with a British First Model Land Pattern “Brown Bess” .75-caliber musket, first introduced in 1722, with cartouche and bayonet. (Authors)





granted itself power to draft and train militia, though the Proprietors never provided sufficient resources. Militia service was not popular, as it kept a colonist from work necessary to develop his land and provide for his family.

By 1710 colonists thought there was “no body so fit to defend their properties as themselves.” This contrasted sharply with England, where common soldiers were considered the dregs of society. British officers scorned the militia as being led by “Blacksmiths, Taylors and all the Banditti the country affords.” Other local troops included Volunteer Companies (often social societies) and Rangers, experienced woodsmen recruited to patrol the boundaries with Indian territories and Spanish Florida. The militia included slaves (who could win freedom by killing an enemy in battle) and friendly Indians.

Militia regiments were raised in geographically specific areas by local community leaders, who were usually elected to lead the units they raised. Colonels and above had their commissions confirmed by the governor, but the lower-level officers were elected or sometimes appointed by the colonel, who often chose from among his trusted friends and relatives. The system might appear ripe for nepotism, but competent and charismatic leaders floated to the top; poor leaders were deposed or found themselves without followers. Such ad hoc units had no fixed strength; numbers varied according to population, popularity of the leader, popularity of the pending campaign, and even season. Men would simply decline to participate in a campaign and other men attached themselves to accompany friends or family members.

LEFT

The “uniform” of the militia (and other units) is well depicted by this member of Clarks Volunteer Rifle Company of Watts Regiment (Pennsylvania) 1776–77. Note the tomahawk and antler-handled knife at his left side. (Painting by Don Troiani, www.historicalimagebank.com)

RIGHT

This freedman serving in a Spartan militia regiment wears buskins (over-boots), and is armed with a musket. The white strap across his shoulders is the tumpline of a knapsack. Planters of the coastal region refused to enlist black soldiers, but there was less resistance in the back-country. (Painting by Don Troiani, www.historicalimagebank.com)

Sometimes men “reassigned” themselves to join friends in another unit on the battlefield.

When the ranks of privates could not be filled by volunteers, men were conscripted. Young single men who had no critical trade or community standing were the preferred draftees. Those with financial resources could hire a substitute.

By 1775 most back-country communities were based on ethnicity or religion, a fact reflected in the militia. The Patriot militias were heavily Presbyterian, Baptist, or Methodist Scots-Irish, though numerous members of other communities served. Some communities – Quakers, and, after their crushing defeat at Moore’s Creek Bridge (February 27, 1776), the Loyalist highland Scots – largely “sat out” the war.

Early in the war South Carolina formally recognized itself as a state rather than a colony, and reorganized its forces. The March 1778 structure attached six regiments of State Troops to the Continental Army. State Troops were Regulars enlisted, paid, and equipped by the individual states. The Continental Line troops were long-service Regulars of the American national army, stingily paid and equipped by Congress. Three independent companies – one of artillery, one Ranger, and the Raccoon Company (including Catawba Indians) – were placed under direct control of the State Council of Safety. The majority of the militia was organized into three brigades of five regiments each; a fourth brigade was created later. The 1st and later the 2nd Spartan Regiment were included in the 2nd Brigade (Brigadier Richard Richardson).

With the fall of Charleston in May 1780, the State could no longer support or control a brigaded militia, so the regiments were cut loose to recruit, supply, and coordinate as best they could. Eventually 29 regiments were operational. These disparate groups eventually organized themselves into two loose “brigades,” one under Colonel Thomas Sumter operating in the highlands, the other under Colonel Francis Marion, the “Swamp Fox,” operating in the coastal regions. Officers were expected to serve only as temporary leaders in time of need, but in the prolonged revolution senior officers usually served “for the duration.”

There were “leg infantry” and dragoon units, but most regiments were mounted infantry who fought on foot. Muskets and rifles could not be reloaded on horseback, cavalry sabers and dragoon pistols were relatively rare, and most men preferred to fight on foot. In time of need, ad hoc dragoon formations were formed by combining men from various regiments.

The militia brigades were by no means orthodox units. The subordinate colonels felt free either to cooperate or operate separately, as they saw fit. Much resentment within the Patriot leadership was caused by individual colonels diverging to secure their own communities, often with the consensus of the men of their unit. Sometimes regiments split, and the subdivided “battalions” pursued separate interests. Furthermore Sumter fought a more orthodox war as he maneuvered to raid Tory settlements and engage British formations that had to concentrate to counter him, while Marion harassed British supply and communication lines, forcing British dispersal of effort. They were disparate but complementary strategies. However, the system did create problems. Unusually forceful or charismatic individuals like Thomas Sumter rose to senior rank with little tactical or strategic prowess.

Following the fall of Charleston, the “draft” became increasingly murky. Captains were responsible for recruitment of their companies, and typically

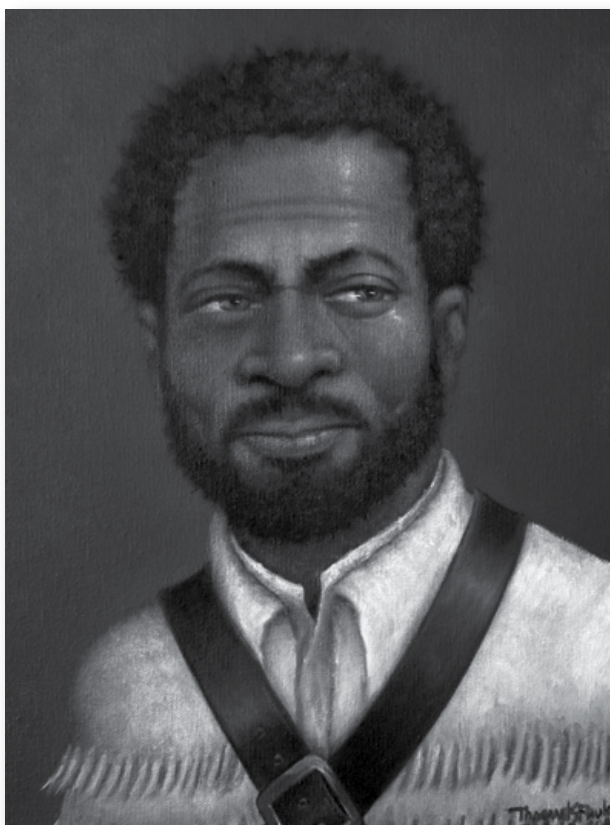
delegated this task to lieutenants, who scoured the countryside drafting known Patriots into service. Men might be released from service, only to be immediately drafted for another term of duty. Over a three-year period Abel Kendrick was repeatedly drafted and spent 24 months on active duty. Charles Gilbert stated that over a period of two years, nine months “so urgent was the necessities of the Country during the whole of the above period that this declarant was at no time permitted to follow any civil pursuit.” Such militiamen became veteran, though untrained, soldiers.

As the conflict degenerated into a savage civil war of raids and murders, often the safest place to be was on active militia duty. Officers and many privates became a permanent cadre, and frequently it was the privates who provided unit continuity as officers came and went.

The pool of known Patriots was informally divided into three rotating “classes”: one on active campaign; a second as a sort of home guard securing sites such as mills and the homes of senior officers; and a third as inactive “minutemen.” Brandon is also known to have created a permanent guard company to garrison a blockhouse that protected his home and critical infrastructure like mills. Brandon and others have been depicted as “plunderers” who confiscated properties for personal gain, but it was a prudent move in a bitter partisan war, and a way of paying, feeding, and equipping troops at a time when there was no government to do so. Brandon’s guard company was a rotation composed of men from various companies.

Inured to a life of harsh terrain and climate, brutal labor, and constant threat from warlike Cherokee and Creeks, the back-country settlers were good potential soldiers. Their primary shortcoming was discipline. Their culture fostered individualism, and near-total absence of military discipline was always an issue. In 1759 Governor Lyttelton had observed that the militia was poorly armed, mutinous, and prone to desert en masse. Unlike in Europe, men could not be forced to fight, but had to be convinced it was in their best interests to fight. This was often expressed in pre-battle conferences, when officers – or privates – might elect not to participate in an operation they thought ill advised. Officers could not enforce harsh discipline, and peer pressure was all that held men in the ranks.

The citizen soldiers of the militia regiments were a true cross section of their society. Colonel Thomas Brandon was born to Scots-Irish parents in Pennsylvania in 1741, and moved south in 1754. He was a large man, with a muscular build, kindly face, and intelligent black eyes that could “fair look a man through.” Personal accounts belie his reputation for having a vicious temperament. Despite limited schooling, Brandon was a successful planter and



Freedman Ishmael Titus is known to have fought at King’s Mountain. The portrait is based upon the appearance of his descendants. (Painting by Thomas Paul Kelley, courtesy American Revolutionary War Living History Association)

local community leader, and the uncle of 16-year-old militiamen Christopher Brandon and Thomas Young. James Collins, son of a schoolteacher, was another 16-year-old apprenticed to a tailor. Abel Kendrick and Lewis Turner, of Welsh ancestry, were young men, laborers and small farmers.

We will follow these and other militiamen of the 2nd Spartan Regiment through a savage partisan war that pitted them against their neighbors in the Loyalist militia, British Regulars, Hessian mercenaries, and Britain's tribal allies. All the characters are real; all the events are real.

BELIEF AND BELONGING

By the mid-century, South Carolina contained two separate societies. Coastal society, dominated by the fantastically wealthy “rice kings,” aped London society. But those who returned to England for education or business found that as colonials they were never accepted as equals. They in turn looked down upon the farmers and tradesmen of the mountainous back-country.

The attitude of the Reverend Charles Woodmason, Anglican missionary to the Waxhaws region, was typical. To him the locals were “the most lowest vilest Crew breathing – Scotch Irish Presbyterians from the North of Ireland.” Woodmason ranted that they “live wholly on Butter, Milk, Clabber, and what in England is given to the Hogs and Dogs” and “Live in Logg Cabbins like Hogs – and their Living and Behavior as rude or more so than the savages.”

Most settlers lived in cabins more primitive than this replica in Gaffney, SC. Scorned by the coastal elite, they were the backbone of the militia.
(Authors)





The most accurate contemporary depictions of Patriot military dress were by German artists. *Amerikaner Soldat* by Johann Martin Will depicted the hunting garb, but the soldier is probably a Continental. He is armed with a military musket. (Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University)

Officers and individual militiamen were bonded to their fellow militiamen because most were neighbors or relatives. Most militiamen felt no particular bond to the militia unit as an entity. Loyalty to the state was tenuous; it provided funds to raise and equip units, and pay salaries on a catch-as-catch-can basis, but little else. The faraway national government had little impact on the militiaman's daily life other than occasionally to provide a meager supply of shot, powder, or rations.

CLOTHING AND UNIFORM

The modern concept of colonial dress is heavily influenced by images of the wealthy elite. Everyday dress for the common man was far different. The most common fabrics of the era were wool and linen. Cotton, difficult to process, was used for luxury items like underclothing. Pure wool broadcloth required a labor-intensive fulling process that made it dense and water-resistant. Woolen broadcloth was expensive, and woolen coats were often handed down as heirlooms.

Often the first crop planted by settlers was a small patch of flax. The fibers could be spun into thread with spinning wheels, and woven into coarse linen fabric on looms built by local craftsmen. The finer-textured linen fibers would be woven into cloth for items such as shirts (then considered an undergarment). Coarser material was used to produce linsey-woolsey, a coarse, sturdy cloth made of flax and wool, used for everyday clothing. The typical division of labor was that women did the spinning, and men the weaving, which was considered a trade.

The amount of effort involved meant that the minimum amount of cloth necessary was utilized. The Reverend Woodmason was scandalized by the form-fitting clothing and lack of petticoats among the women, who used “a scant five yards” in a dress.

Men’s daily work clothing consisted of a shirt and trousers, but the militia service decreed a hunting shirt and trousers for a uniform. James Collins left a first-hand account: “we furnished our own clothes, composed of coarse materials and all home spun; our over dress was a hunting shirt, of what was called linsey woolsey, well belted around us.” Among the best references for the militia “uniform” are portraits of General Daniel Morgan, who typically wore this clothing. George Washington advocated hunting clothing as a uniform better suited to American conditions, and it was often worn by troops of the Continental Line.

Colonels were responsible for arming and equipping their regiment, to be reimbursed by the state. After Charleston fell and the state government went into exile, colonels paid critical expenses from their own pockets. Each man equipped himself as best he could.

Trousers were simple in cut, with narrow legs to avoid snagging in dense underbrush. For some, cloth wrap leggings – or more rarely lace-up leather leggings – protected the lower legs.

The distinctive hunting shirt was a thigh-length jacket with a broad drawstring or belt to secure it shut. It typically had multiple layers for warmth. The fabric was not water-resistant, so hunting shirts were double- or triple-caped; the shoulders had two or three additional overlapping layers of fabric designed to protect against rain. A large collar could be pulled up under the hat for additional protection.

Trousers and shirt had raveled edges to the margins of the fabric to speed the drying of wet fabric, but it also helped to disguise the shape of the wearer. This raveling has led to the misconception that militiamen wore leather suits with cut fringes, but period artwork clearly depicts cloth. Trousers and shirt were typically left in the natural color of the fibers, beige or pale grey to light brown, but could be dyed a dark brown with boiled walnut hulls, or various colors using vegetable dyes.

The felt hat was one of the few pure wool items, and essential to protect the wearer from the brutal sun, rain, and cold. The broad brim could be folded into the fashionable tri-cornered hat of the gentleman, but the militia typically wore the brim unfolded and drooping.

In skirmishes between Patriot and Tory militia wearing the same basic clothing, troops would attach some sort of recognition sign to the hat. At the battle of King’s Mountain, Patriot militiamen tucked a scrap of white paper into the hatband, while Tory militiamen usually wore a sprig of evergreen leaves. The hat might be tucked into the belt during fighting since it would be knocked off by limbs and underbrush; memoirs mention using a scarf or bandana to secure long and unkempt hair.



Daniel Nicholas Chodowiecki’s comparison of the “sharpshooter” (rifleman’s) uniform with that worn by the Continental Line. (NARA)

This replica hunting shirt with drawstring wristbands in the Cherokee County (SC) History and Arts Museum shows one typical pattern and how it was worn over an undershirt. Note the tomahawk and powder horn. Metal canteens were rare.



James Collins described the manufacture of his specialized dragoon helmet in detail. A layer of greased leather was formed over a wooden block, overlain with two protective straps of steel, one running from ear to ear, the other fore and aft, and with thick wool padding. The outside was a piece of bearskin with a small leather brim in front, and a tuft of white horsetail hair attached to the rear. White feathers or deer tails attached over the ears completed the decor. “The cap was heavy, but custom soon made it so that it could be worn without inconvenience.”

Footgear was sturdy, rough leather, low-top boots or shoes, typically with squared toes. Horsemen and officers might wear high-topped boots

with spurs. Shoes of the period were not made in pairs; identical shoes molded themselves to the respective feet with continued wear.

In cold weather a heavier linsey-woolsey coat or a blanket draped over the shoulders provided additional protection.

The climate and terrain were brutal on men and clothing. Period accounts refer to the ragged condition of militiamen, and even better-supplied British Regulars and Tory militia decried their own raggedness. Clothing was typically tattered and much patched. Boots or shoes rotted, replaced by

A

MILITIA CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

The standing militiaman at left (1) is armed with an expensive and elegant small-bore hunting rifle, as indicated by the delicate design and fancy brass work around the patch box built into the butt of the rifle. He wears a typical linsey-woolsey hunting shirt and narrow-legged trousers, and wide-brimmed hat. The mounted militiaman at lower right (2) is armed with a sturdy military musket, as indicated by the sling, and the cartouche (ammunition box) with prepared cartridges on his right hip. Additional weapons include a pair of heavy dragoon pistols carried in bucket holsters on the pommel of the saddle. A light bedroll is tied to the rear (cantle) of the saddle. The militia used whatever weapons could be acquired, including from left to right, a small-bore hunting rifle (3), large-bore fowling piece (shotgun) (4), a captured British “Brown Bess” Short Land Pattern military musket (5), and a 1766 model Charleville military musket of a type provided in large numbers by the French (6). For scale, the Charleville was 60 inches/150 cm in length. The deer hide boot was used to protect the firing mechanism of a rifle or musket from rain or damp (7). Also shown are a typical dragoon pistol, and locally manufactured swords, one in a simple hanger (8). Smaller items at lower left include the tomahawk or war hatchet (9), and locally manufactured knives of variable quality (10). The knife and drinking cup typically constituted the ordinary militiaman’s only mess gear (11). The pan brush and wire vent pick were usually carried on a chain or string (12). The hinged bullet mold, powder measure cup, and ball starter were unique to the caliber of the rifleman’s specific weapon (13). For scale, the overall length of the tomahawk was 18 in/48 cm.





LEFT

This 1890 depiction of a Virginia rifleman shows what appears to be a recognition marking on the front of the hat. (US Army via NARA)



RIGHT

This 1890 illustration of Maryland riflemen depicts a heavier winter shirt with large collar, and fur hat. (US Army via NARA)

simple leather moccasins, or leather bags with a drawstring around the ankle. Younger militiamen often went barefoot.

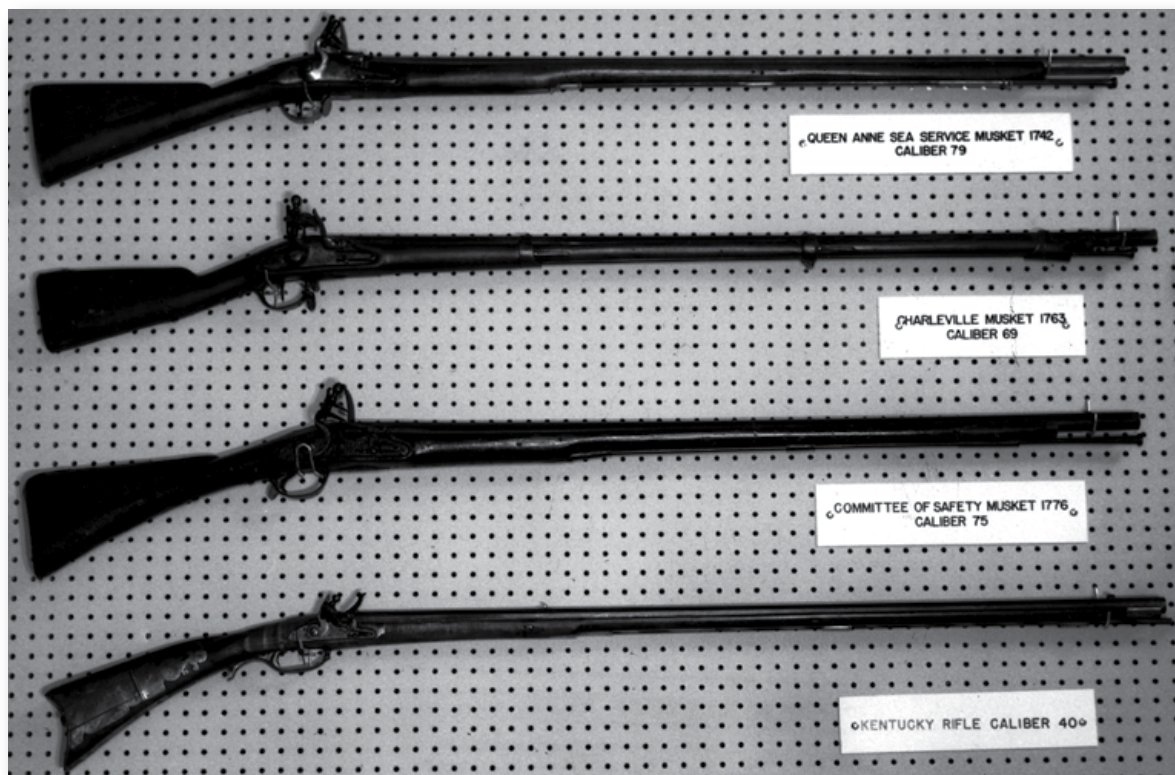
Baths were not a common occurrence even for the upper classes. After weeks in a hot climate without bathing or changing clothes, the militiamen described themselves as dirty and ill-smelling. The fashion of the day was to be clean-shaven, not often possible on campaign. Similarly, haircuts were few and far between.

WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT – THE MINIMALIST SOLDIER

Military histories often refer to “living off the land” but few armies ever did so. The militiamen of the Southern Campaign actually did live off the land, carrying very minimal gear and seldom any significant provisions.

Other misconceptions have to do with the idea of the Americans as superior marksmen, and tactics. Hollywood and popular history have also fostered the notion that the British fought from formations, but the British Army had learned much from the French and Indian War (Seven Years War) of 1754–63. Each regiment included a company of light infantry (*jaegers* in Hessian regiments) trained in frontier-style warfare. British infantrymen were also trained to fight in “open order,” lines of widely separated men, to facilitate movement through dense forest or underbrush.

Many were equal to any American marksman. The idea that highly accurate “long rifles” were common among American troops is one of the most persistent myths. Historian Lyman Draper (1815–91) wrote fulsomely



of the reputed marksmanship of the “mountaineer” riflemen, despite contrary evidence from the recently ended American Civil War. There were of course some excellent marksmen like Second Spartans militiamen John Savage, William Sharp, William Giles, and William Kennedy Senior.

Firearms were never very common, even on the frontier. The famous “Kentucky” rifles were produced in very small numbers, most after the war. This weapon, firmly embedded in American myth, had very limited military utility. Small in caliber, its graceful construction made it delicate. The small bore could not accept a plug bayonet, the front sight precluded a socket bayonet, nor could it be used as a club *in extremis*.

The slow rate of fire limited the military utility of all rifles. The great military advantage of the smoothbore musket was the individual prepared paper cartridge, a ball and pre-measured powder charge wrapped in paper. Typically a small piece of string pinched the middle of the cartridge and separated the ball from the powder. The soldier tore open the end of the paper containing the powder, primed the pan with some of the loose powder, and dumped the remainder down the large bore. He then ripped off the end of the cartridge containing the ball leaving it inside a small piece of the cartridge paper for wadding, and ball and wadding were shoved down the bore with the ramrod. An average user could achieve a rate of fire of three rounds per minute.

The rifleman used a powder measure to determine the proper amount of powder for his individual weapon, carefully poured it down the small bore, and primed the pan. The close-fitting ball was seated into the rifling using a carved wooden ball starter. The ball was shoved down the narrow bore by brute force with the ramrod. The rate of fire was less than two rounds per

A comparison of common period firearms; a British .79-caliber Queen Anne naval-service variant of the “Brown Bess” (top), French Charleville .69-caliber military musket, American-manufactured Committee of Safety .75-caliber musket, and an American .40-caliber rifle. The Charleville is 60in/150cm long. (USMCHC)

Components of a typical flintlock firearm. In continued firing the flint had to be reseated using the knob at upper left, and the vent cleared using the vent pick. (Authors)



minute for a skilled rifleman. Poor-quality powder resulted in fouling of the bore, and the weapon had to be cleaned more often than a musket. A rifleman who could hit a man at 200 yards (185m) was considered an outstanding marksman.

With his slow rate of fire and lack of a bayonet, the rifleman was at a considerable tactical disadvantage. Riflemen were often organized into special units and used as skirmishers or on the periphery of formations to take advantage of the peculiarities of the weapon.

Most militiamen were armed with a hodgepodge of weapons, including fowling pieces (shotguns – James Collins carried one of these), and Thomas Young referred to “my large old musket.” Captured British and German weapons, muskets provided by the French, cruder American-made rifles and muskets, dragoon carbines, fusils (light muskets) and a staggering variety of imported European weapons only added to the variety. One source alone lists over 40 types of weapons. Men had no qualms about exchanging weapons if a better article became available; James Collins exchanged his shotgun for a fine rifle dropped by a fleeing Tory.

Firearms were never ubiquitous on the frontier, as demonstrated by militia muster records. Governor Tryon of North Carolina reported that when the militia was called out against the Regulators in 1771 “not more than one man in five had arms.” The preserved muster record for one company of the Tennessee militia called for service against the Creeks in 1779 provides additional detail.

B

COLONEL BRANDON'S SWORD

The militia was chronically short of weapons, powder, and lead for shot. Swords and knives were manufactured in local forges, using whatever steel could be scavenged; saw blades were prized for the quality of the steel. Some knives were manufactured from broken swords. Dependent upon the skill of the blacksmith, the swords varied considerably in design and quality, but most were patterned after familiar cavalry sabers. Thomas Brandon was unusually tall and strong, and had a suitably large sword manufactured for him. A relatively affluent farmer and political figure, Brandon is wearing his everyday “town clothes” as the blacksmith presents his handiwork.





Note the finer craftsmanship of this preserved French Charleville musket. (USMCHC)

The 44-man company reported for duty with 26 tomahawks and four firearms. The Tory militias were just as poorly armed. Before the battle of Ramseur's Mill (June 20, 1780) Lieutenant-Colonel John Moore's Burke County (NC) Loyalist Militia assembled 1,300 men; about one in four was armed.

Spherical balls were fired by both rifles and muskets. The musket also commonly fired buck-and-ball, hunting ammunition that provided the capability to fire at whatever game presented itself. As military ammunition it increased the chance of striking the target with at least one projectile. The user loaded the powder, then several sub-caliber buckshot, held in place by the wadding and main ball. At combat ranges the sub-caliber shot could inflict grievous wounds; Thomas Sumter was severely wounded by buckshot at Blackstock's.



The cartouche (cartridge box) for the military musket was typically worn on a leather or linen shoulder strap. Holes drilled in a wooden block held multiple prepared rounds. Two leather flaps (inner flap behind fingers) protected ammunition from the elements. (Authors)



Rifles and muskets quickly fouled with powder residue. This re-enactor has opened the frizzen and is clearing the vent of his "Brown Bess" with the wire vent pick. Powder residue was cleaned from the flint by licking it. The other implement is a combination hammer and screwdriver. (Authors)

Each man also carried a small assortment of implements necessary to maintain the weapon. A wire pick was used to clear unburned powder from the vent, the tube that connected the ignition pan to the main bore. A small brush was used to clear unburned powder and debris from the pan. These implements could be carried on a small chain that hooked into a buttonhole, or on a cord around the neck.

A severe limiting factor was shortage of ammunition. The British government had long limited the importation of lead and powder into the restive colonies. Black powder of at least adequate grade could be produced from local resources – abundant charcoal, rarer sulfur, and locally produced saltpeter. The big problem was lead; there was limited production from mines in southwestern Virginia, but most had to be imported. James Collins related that the militia "had often to apply to the old women of the country, for their old pewter dishes and spoons, to supply the place of lead; and if we had lead sufficient to make balls, half lead and the other pewter, we felt well supplied."

Muzzle-loading smooth-bore pistols were the weapons of officers and horsemen. Heavy, dragoon pistols were carried in leather bucket holsters attached to the horse's neck or saddle. They were usually fired only once in combat, after which their weight and sturdy construction made them useful as clubs.

The slow rate of fire and relative inaccuracy of all firearms forced great reliance upon edged weapons. The militia's primary weapons were firearms but period accounts indicate most deaths and wounds resulted from edged weapons. The limitations of firearms determined the course of a typical action, and preferred British practice was to fire one or two volleys, then charge with the bayonet. British and Hessian Regulars, and, to a lesser extent the Tory militias, were trained in the use of the bayonet, as were the Continentals. Patriot militia was seldom

Seating a ball into the bore of a rifle with the ball punch. The ball was usually wrapped in a small piece of greased paper from the patch box to ease loading. (Authors)



Older weapons remained in service on both sides. British Major-General John Burgoyne's "pocket pistol" was surrendered at Saratoga. (NARA)



equipped with bayonets, and even less often trained in their use. The glistening steel bayonet is an intimidating weapon, and it was common for the militia to flee in panic from a bayonet charge.

The preferred militia weapon was the inexpensive tomahawk or war hatchet. Typically made of iron with a sturdy wooden shaft, it was not a cutting weapon. The killing power of the tomahawk was in its effect as a narrow-edged club; a blow with the dull edge shattered bones and crushed skulls.

The most common edged weapon among the militia was a simple straight-bladed single-edged butcher knife, typically about 10in. (25cm) in length, with a simple wooden handle. The knife was valued more for its general utility than as a weapon.

Swords were the weapons of horsemen and officers. Collins recorded: "Swords, at first, were scarce, but we had several good blacksmiths among us... If we got hold of a good piece of steel we would keep it; and likewise, go to all the sawmills and take all the old whip saws we could find, set three or four smiths to work, in one shop, and take the steel we had to another. In this way we pretty soon had a good supply of swords and butcher knives." Totally dependent upon the skill of the blacksmith, most locally made swords were straight-bladed, single-edged sabers. The quality of the steel was often

It was common practice to cut down the barrel of dragoon pistols to make them more manageable. This example is missing part of the wooden fore-stock. The metal on the butt helped counterbalance the heavy barrel. (Authors)





poor; Colonel Thomas Brandon's sword bent when he struck a Loyalist over the head. (The man survived, and the reputed hardness of his head made him the butt of jokes after the war.)

The militiaman's additional equipment was very limited. Generally operating close to home in sparsely settled country, they were heavily dependent upon local resources. James Collins stated: "We carried no camp equipage, no cooking utensils, nor any thing to encumber us; we depended on what chance or kind providence might cast in our way, and were always ready to decamp in a short time."

To facilitate carrying, strips could be cut from sheet lead, or lead stock melted and molded into ingots in wooden molds (left). Lead strip melted in a ladle (left center) was poured into various types of bullet molds (right). Muskets were more standardized, but the wide variety of rifle types and calibers required each man to mold his own rounds. The drill brace (center) is fitted with a steel burr to ream out molds to the appropriate caliber. (Authors)



After a few rounds dense clouds of powder smoke clouded the battlefield, limiting the long-range accuracy of rifles. (Authors)

The ordinary militiaman carried most of his possessions in a cloth or leather “possible” bag slung over the shoulder by a broad strap. These included a small cup for drinking, and any food that might be available. Most did not carry canteens as streams were numerous. Metal, wood, or cow’s-horn forks and spoons were available, though no mention is made of eating implements other than the butcher knife. Presumably the militiaman might carry such grooming items as a razor and perhaps a wooden or bone comb, though no mention is made of their use.

The bullet mold was used to cast shot from lead strip or pewter melted in a small iron ladle. Hinged iron molds were used to cast shot of various sizes. Examples also survive of molds carved from locally available soapstone; these consisted of two halves held together by wooden pins. In either case the shot was a spherical ball with a cone-shaped neck where the metal was poured into the mold; this neck was trimmed off to be re-melted.

Another essential item was the tinderbox and flint for starting fires. A small piece of cloth was placed into a metal box with a hole in one side. Placed into a campfire, the cloth was reduced to easily ignitable carbon tinder. The box kept the tinder dry until needed.

Most militia functioned as mounted infantry, and a man’s single most expensive item was his simple saddle, usually much like the modern English riding saddle. A leather seat was molded over a wooden frame, with flap-like side panels to protect the legs, simple metal-frame stirrups on leather bands, and a broad girth secured it to the horse. The more complex dragoon saddle had a small pommel in front, with a low cantle in the rear. Light luggage, such as a blanket roll or leather saddle bags, could be secured to the cantle.

TRAINING AND LIFE ON CAMPAIGN

Militiamen, from privates to senior officers, were self-taught soldiers. Prior to the war there was virtually no formal training for the back-country militia. Most officers and many enlisted men were literate, but preserved lists of personal libraries reveal no military books such as those that might be found in England. At periodic musters officers might try to demonstrate a few simple evolutions, but about the best that could be achieved were a straggling formation and a single ragged volley. The incredible variety of weaponry made standardized drill virtually impossible. In war the militiamen enlisted for short terms (usually 90 days), or like Francis Marion’s men were constantly on the run, so the militiamen had no formal training or garrison life. In rare cases Continental officers might try to teach the militia a few simple evolutions. Most militiamen reported for a muster and immediately marched off to war.

On the march, men struggled along as best they – or their horses – could keep up, and stragglers were common. In the southern climate the summer heat – often over 100F/38C – was a major issue. The local militia was more inured to the brutal conditions, but one newly arrived British regiment suffered over 50 heat-related deaths on its first lengthy march.

The unimproved roads or tracks generated clouds of dust in dry weather, and deep, glutinous mud when wet. Streams had to be crossed at fords or with confiscated boats, and the waters might rise unpredictably with the frequent rains. The constant wet made shoes and clothing rot away. Rocky terrain and briery vegetation tore at clothing and wore out shoes.



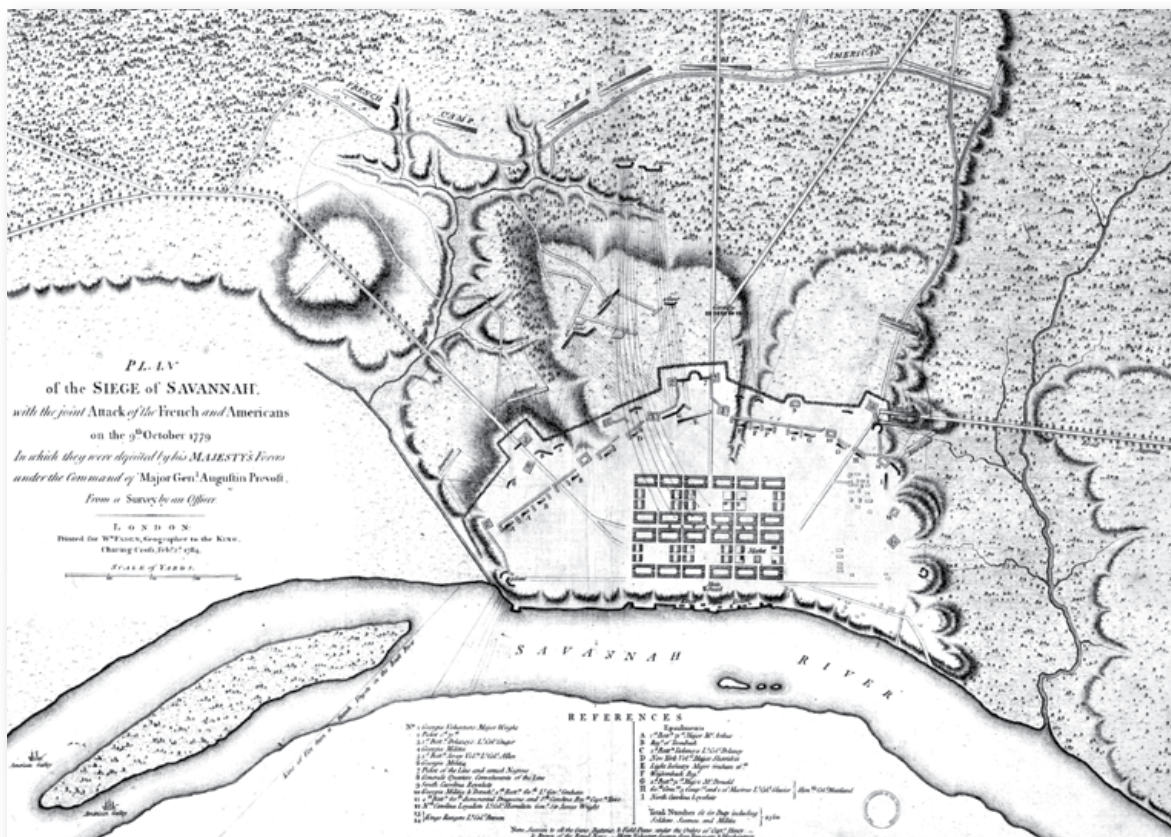
Senior officers like Thomas Sumter traveled in relative comfort, with tents, cooking gear, camp beds, and servants to care for their equipage. Still, their camp life hardly matched that of British officers, who often traveled with wine, china, silver cutlery, and mistresses.

Most militiamen brought some bread or parched corn from home, quickly consumed. In populous regions provisions were purchased, or seized from local Tories (or local Whigs in the case of Tory militias). Officers got first pick of any household food, and of course alcohol such as whiskey, brandy, or cider. If a campsite lay in an unpopulated area the militiamen went hungry, often for days at a time. Stored foodstuffs like meal or dried corn might be purchased from friendly residents, or again simply confiscated. Much food was scavenged from standing crops like unripe corn, eaten raw or hastily roasted by throwing the un-shucked ears into the coals of a fire. Sweet potatoes (not to be confused with yams) were a common crop and could be quickly dug from the ground and cooked by throwing them into the coals of a fire. These starchy tubers provided quick but long-lasting energy, and were easily carried. A variety of other crops were grown, so the diet was neither monotonous nor unhealthy. The ever-censorious Reverend Woodmason complained of being fed “Musk melons, Cucumbers, Green Apples and Peaches and such Trash.”

Cornmeal or flour could be quickly baked into camp bread. Mixed with water, cornmeal was molded into balls or flat cakes and cooked near or even in the coals. More palatable was gooey wheat-flour dough, molded around a green stick, and placed near a fire. The stick was rotated to cook evenly, and the bread gnawed off the stick.

It was common to procure and slaughter cattle, if any presented themselves, but meat was fairly rare since even friendly farmers tended to seclude their cattle.

The defeat at Saratoga prompted the British “Southern Strategy.” Daniel Morgan is at right center in the light-colored hunting uniform. Horatio Gates is at center, arms outspread. After a painting by John Trumbull. (NARA)



The unsuccessful siege of British-occupied Savannah was the first experience of European-style warfare for the militiamen. Patriot forces waded through flooded terrain to attack the British bastion at left. (NARA)

Cattle were butchered on the spot, and roasted over open fires. Strips of dried meat might be carried along, but the time required to dry the meat made this practice rare.

Without axes or saws, cooking and warming fires were built of whatever wood the men could gather. Fires were often built from fence rails provided by farmers as their "contribution" to the cause, or torn from the fences of unfriendly farmers.

Larger formations appointed a commissary officer who sent out foraging parties to scour the countryside for supplies. When operating alongside State Troops or Continentals the militiamen might be supplied by those formations. A significant problem with supply was that whole regions were stripped of foodstuffs, and the campsites and temporary bases of both regular and militia units were increasingly determined by the limitations of local food supplies.



HASTY MILITIA CAMP

With minimal supplies and equipment, militia depended almost entirely upon local resources. These militiamen are digging up a farmer's sweet potato patch, and cooking the starchy tubers in the coals of fires built from the farmer's fence rails. Without axes or saws they are building "Indian fires," feeding the wood into the fire lengthwise as it burns. The nearest men are cooking potatoes, while late arrivals dig for potatoes and dismantle fences. They have also obtained some buttermilk, the tart, thickened liquid left after churning butter from cream, and prized as a source of protein. The seated man's "possible bag" lies by his side, and atop the bag is a hunting horn used for signaling. One exhausted militiaman is already asleep, with the firing mechanism of his weapon tucked between his thighs to protect it from rain or dew.





The frontal assault on Savannah's defenses was the bloodiest day of the war. This illustration by A.I. Keller accurately depicted the militiamen supporting Continentals. (NARA)

Food or the lack of it determined the outcome of battles. British, Patriot, and Tory forces alike often arrived at the scene of battle exhausted and weakened by hunger and thirst. The course of battle sometimes turned when starved militiamen (or Regulars on both sides) paused to plunder an enemy's food or liquor supplies. An overabundance of supply might also tip the outcome. On the eve of the battle of Camden, Patriot General Horatio Gates fed his starving troops a hasty meal that included cornmeal mixed with molasses. The molasses, a natural laxative, badly debilitated most of his troops.

Once the militiaman was fed, he was left to make his own sleeping arrangements. Farm wagons might be used to transport officers' baggage and supplies, but the enlisted men – usually mounted infantry – made do with simple bedrolls or light packs. Often without tents, the militiaman slept in his clothes under a light blanket or his saddle blanket, with his hat to protect the face. On cold nights the sleeper could avoid dew or frost by sleeping under bushes or trees, but was often at the mercy of wind, rain, or snow. It was common practice to sleep with the flintlock mechanism of the rifle or musket between the thighs to protect against damp that might cause a misfire.

Although some leaders like Francis Marion were rigorously conscious of the threat of surprise attack – Marion supposedly never camped two successive nights in the same spot – in many cases camp discipline was lax. Sentries were sometimes not posted, or derelict in their duty, so that surprise attacks on camps were common to both sides.

Medical care ranged from simple to non-existent, and contagious diseases were rampant. In an era when hygiene was poorly understood, lax camp discipline fostered dysentery. Insect-borne diseases like malaria and yellow fever were common, and it was not uncommon for armies to cease campaigning and encamp on higher – cooler and healthier – ground in the hot months of



summer. In the disruption of war, smallpox ravaged both sides, though Continental troops benefited from the newly invented smallpox inoculation.

There was no organized system for dealing with combat casualties, although truces to recover the wounded were commonplace. A handful of military surgeons – far more common in Tory service – cared for the wounded of both sides. The more fortunate wounded were carried away by their comrades, but after big battles the wounded might lie unattended for days until families or members of the local communities (often Quakers) sought them out.

Casualties “fortunate” enough to reach a surgeon suffered hasty amputations, or probing and debridement of wounds with non-sterile instruments, knives, or gory dirty fingers. One accepted method of cleaning a torso wound involved drawing a silk handkerchief through the hole with a musket ramrod. Antiseptics were unknown. Alcohol might serve as an anesthetic, but surgeons believed that pain speeded the healing process.

Convalescent wounded received what care their relatives or the local civilians could provide – usually only changing crude dressings and applying herbal or mud poultices. An added problem was that, in the bitter partisan war, casualties often had to be hidden in the forest to avoid murder by vengeful raiders from the other side. Nevertheless these tough back-country fighters often survived ghastly wounds including traumatic amputations, shattered bones, and even severe brain injuries.

Note the symbolism in this engraving from a painting of the battle of Camden by Alonzo Chappel. At left Patriot militia flee before a British bayonet charge, while a Continental officer tries to rally them. The militiamen leave the Continentals to be slaughtered (right). At center British infantrymen bayonet the German-born “Baron” DeKalb. Redcoats taunted the dying DeKalb for hours. (NARA)

THE EXPERIENCE OF BATTLE

In 1775 the most influential Loyalist leader in the back-country was militia colonel Thomas Fletchall. One of Fletchall’s subordinates, John Thomas Senior, soon resigned his commission and formed the rebel Spartan Regiment, and in September 1775 Brandon raised a company in the new regiment. One of Brandon’s first steps was to have manufactured a suitably large sword.

In September Patriot militia seized the defenses of Charleston and the Royal Governor took refuge aboard a British ship. In October Loyalist militia seized a supply of British munitions intended for the Cherokee under an existing treaty, and in November the rebel Council of Safety organized an expedition to recover the munitions and discourage Loyalist recruiting. General Richard Richardson instructed Thomas to muster the Spartan Regiment to join him.

The commander of the fort at Ninety-Six persuaded his entire company to side with the Tories. The Whig force sent to recapture the fort was small, and instead constructed a hasty fort of fence rails and animal hides near the town. A Tory militia relief force arrived and after a brief counter-siege (November 18–21), both militias agreed to withdraw.

Richardson repudiated the Treaty of Ninety-Six and pursued the remnants of the Loyalist force. His men were by now ragged, hungry, some barefoot, and unprepared for the rapidly approaching winter. By mid-December the large and slow-moving Patriot force had captured Fletchall, and on December 22 routed a large Loyalist force in the Cherokee territory. Bitter cold and deep snow plagued the unprepared militia on the return march and imparted the name Snow Campaign.

In the spring of 1776, Brandon was elected to the new State legislature. The botched British attempt to capture Charleston in June 1776 fomented an uprising of the Cherokee, and Brandon now a major, and his battalion helped defeat the tribes in small skirmishes and burned numerous towns during August 1776. On September 19 the militia and Catawba scouts stumbled into an ambush in a gorge called the Black Hole on the Coweecho River in North Carolina. The militia force fought hand to hand until a desperate charge routed the Cherokee.

For two years an uneasy peace prevailed as England virtually ignored the Southern colonies, pursuing a strategy of subduing New England.

In late 1778 Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Clinton implemented the new Southern Strategy, transporting a force under Lieutenant-Colonel Archibald



Narrow, deep rivers were significant military barriers, unappreciated today. Fords and ferries were the sites of many battles and skirmishes. In the rainy climate the rivers flooded quickly and without warning. (Authors)



The brutal and ruthless "green dragoons" of Tarleton's Loyalist British Legion were recruited from the northern colonies. They were the militia's most feared foes. Note the fur flaps on the pistol holsters to protect against rain or snow. (Painting by Don Troiani, www.historicalimagebank.com)

Campbell south to Georgia. George Washington dispatched part of the Continental army south, marching slowly overland. Another British army marched north from St Augustine Florida, rolling up rebel outposts. Clinton outmaneuvered Patriot forces in a series of small battles, and on December 29, 1778 captured Savannah.

Sometime in late 1778 the Spartan Regiment divided and Thomas Brandon assumed command of the Second Spartans. Brandon's new regiment would fight in 37 actions, "as much hard fighting and swift running as any of their contemporaries."

A powerful French force landed unopposed and on September 11, 1779 invested Savannah. The French commander, Charles Hector the Comte d'Estaing, dithered while the British reinforced the city through his porous

A romanticized portrait of Lieutenant-Colonel Banastre Tarleton, the scourge of the Patriot militia. Fellow British officers described him as pudgy and somewhat homely. His self-serving memoir was critical of Cornwallis. He later served under Wellington in Spain. (NARA, from a 1782 portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds in The British Museum)



blockade. Four companies from Brandon's regiment marched south to participate in the siege.

From September 29 until October 8 the French bombarded the defenses. Reinforced by Patriot Regulars under General Benjamin Lincoln, d'Estaing launched an attack on September 9. In the pre-dawn hours militiamen waded through a half-mile of stinking, waist-deep muck in the coastal marshes to form a second assault wave that would follow the Regulars. Point-blank artillery and massed musket fire from veteran British infantry blew the Regulars back upon the following wave of militia and the mud below the defenses quickly became a charnel house. In language as laconic as that of the ancient Spartans, Abel Kendrick observed that "[we] attacked the British forces in the city but were repulsed and compelled to

retreat." Samuel Mayfield recalled men falling all around him, while he remained miraculously untouched. Lewis Turner simply said, "the British were too hard for us; had to retreat." It was the bloodiest single day of the entire war. Wounded, d'Estaing overruled Lincoln and broke off the siege.

In December 1779 Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Clinton brought another British force south to complete the subjugation of the South. After a series of small skirmishes Clinton bottled up the Patriot army in Charleston. From March 29, 1780 the British bombarded the city, and on May 12 the city capitulated. The loss included several of the most experienced regiments of Continentals, and triggered a withdrawal of regular Patriot forces from the South.

The rebel government sought refuge in North Carolina. Some were imprisoned, but many rebel officers were allowed to go home under parole. Among those who refused parole were Colonel James Williams of the Little River Regiment, John Thomas Junior (who assumed command of his captured father's regiment), Thomas Brandon, and "the refugees," diehard remnants of the Georgia militia.

Thomas Sumter, Andrew Pickens, and John Thomas Senior accepted parole, but these paroles rapidly became farcical. Near Waxhaw's Creek on May 29 Lieutenant-Colonel Banastre Tarleton's British Legion fell upon inexperienced Virginia Continentals and North Carolina militia under Colonel Abraham Buford as they marched away from Charleston. Tarleton demanded surrender. Buford attempted an orderly retreat, but under attack his men threw down their arms in surrender. Tarleton's men cut them down. Some 113 Patriots were killed outright, and 150 wounded. The wounded

were deliberately mutilated, and most died. Only 53 were taken prisoner. “Tarleton’s Quarter” became a Patriot rallying cry.

On a whim too minor to mention in his diary, Tarleton burned Sumter’s plantation, and Pickens’ farm met the same fate. Despite his parole, John Thomas Senior was jailed. With no security to be had from British paroles, and wanton violence everywhere the British army marched, the population was increasingly disaffected.

THE PARTISAN WAR

On June 8 Clinton departed, leaving Cornwallis and about 3,000 men holding an unenviable bag. Between May 29 and June 3 Clinton had released proclamations invalidating paroles, instead requiring a new oath of allegiance that included a promise to fight in British service. Clinton declined to fund Cornwallis’s rump army, forcing confiscation of supplies. The situation was complicated by plagues, looting, and hordes of runaway slaves.

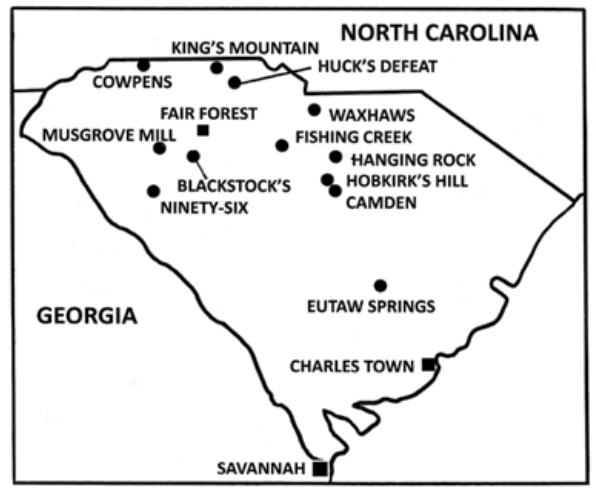
Cornwallis’s strategy hinged upon holding an arc of outposts to screen coastal enclaves. The linchpin was Ninety-Six, a fortified hamlet consisting of a jail, courthouse, and 13 residences and stores. From such garrisons forces could march out to secure the countryside.

Brandon was already proving himself an astute guerrilla leader, but in early June he suffered a setback called Brandon’s Defeat. He was holding prisoners, and trying to drum up new recruits when he camped beside a deep ravine near his home on Fair Forest Creek. He dispatched his most trusted men to conceal their supply of powder in new locations, lest it be discovered by Loyalists. While they were gone, a prisoner escaped and informed Loyalist Captain “Bloody Bill” Cunningham of the camp. In a rare lapse Brandon was taken by surprise. Mounted men tried to distract the Loyalists, while those still on foot escaped by diving into the steep-sided ravine. Five of his men were killed, among them Brandon’s nephew, John Young. One captive was forced to divulge the location of some powder, but little was lost.

Thomas Young overheard Brandon telling his mother (Brandon’s sister) the news of John’s death. “I do not believe I had ever used an oath before that day, but then I tore open my bosom and swore that I would never rest until I avenged his death. Subsequently a hundred Tories felt the weight of my arm for the deed, and around [Adam] Steedham’s neck I fastened the rope as a reward for his cruelties. On the next day I left home in my shirt sleeves and joined Brandon’s party.”

Brandon’s men regrouped and considered their options; most voted to fight. Brandon prudently relocated his family out of harm’s way. Thomas Young and Christopher Brandon, 16 years old, best friends and cousins, guarded their commander’s young children on the march into North Carolina.

One of the most brutal Loyalist militia leaders was Captain Christian Huck, a lawyer from Philadelphia. His British troops and militia burned William Hill’s ironworks, grist mills, and sawmills, brutalized women and children, committed wanton roadside murders, looted, burned homes, and



Locations of the more significant among hundreds of actions fought in South Carolina. Brandon’s home on Fair Forest Creek (modern town of Monarch) was the center of his regiment’s recruiting district. (Authors)

Among Tarleton's tactical advantages were two-pounder (about 40mm) "grasshopper guns." This replica in the Cherokee County (SC) History and Arts Museum has a cast iron tube; the actual guns were lighter and made from stronger bronze. In action the hand spikes behind the near wheel were attached to the trail, helping give the gun its name. (Authors)



slaughtered livestock. At one settlement Huck assembled the men and boys, and enraged them with his threats and blasphemous tirades. Elderly Daniel Collins informed his wife he was "determined to take my gun and when I lay it down, I lay down my life with it."

At Mrs McClure's plantation Huck's men surprised her son and son-in-law molding bullets and carried them along to be hanged after they plundered other plantations. McClure's daughter Mary rode 30 miles (48km) to Colonel Thomas Sumter's camp, where she informed her brothers John (a captain) and Hugh what had happened.

Huck's force of 115 men camped at the Williamson plantation, where five condemned prisoners were locked in a corn crib. Patriot militiamen crept silently into position in the pre-dawn hours of July 12. Sheltering behind a log fence, the Patriots opened a deadly fire at 75 yards. Huck's men failed in three bayonet charges. Huck mounted his horse and was shot down. The Patriots cut down the fleeing Loyalists. At a cost of one killed and one wounded the Patriots had killed or captured most of the enemy and freed the prisoners.

Following the brutal murder of one of Brandon's subordinates, Captain Reid (unarmed at the time), his elderly mother traveled to North Carolina and implored Brandon to avenge him. With a group that included Moses

D

COMMAND DECISION, AUGUST 18, 1780

With minimal formal command structure, militia decisions were usually reached after arguments and debates. Prior to the battle of Musgrove's Mill (August 19, 1780) Colonel James Williams, facing the viewer, argues with Colonel John Thomas Junior. Williams wanted to move captured supplies including precious lead and powder safely beyond British reach. Thomas wanted to carry the supplies along as they moved to join Thomas Sumter for a confrontation with the British. Williams' friend Thomas Brandon looks on unhappily. Brandon wears a frock, a rough linen garment used to protect the clothing while performing heavy labor. Williams and Thomas wear the broadcloth coats and expensive hats of wealthier militiamen, and buskins, over-boots that protected the shoes in muddy or wet conditions. In the background militiamen and slaves load rolls of sheet lead, small kegs of gunpowder, and other captured supplies – packed in hogsheads – into farm wagons and carts for transport.



Most militiamen functioned as mounted infantry, but some were equipped as dragoons and better equipped to fight as cavalry. This militia dragoon has a locally-made sword and helmet, but is otherwise indistinguishable from a mounted rifleman. The rifle was typically carried with the muzzle in a protective boot suspended from the saddle. (Painting by Don Troiani, www.historicalimagebank.com)



Cherry, Richard Brandon, Thomas Young, and Christopher Brandon, the Spartans tracked the killers – Love and Sadler – to a farm and dispatched them. Friends of these men in turn mounted an expedition to kill Brandon.

Learning that the Tories were on his trail, Brandon laid a trap. He met Andrew Love, who had escaped the Tories, and Love guided them to where the Tory party had stopped at the Stallions' home for a meal. Brandon and his party surrounded the house. As Mrs. Stallions (Andrew Love's sister) stepped back into her house after trying to negotiate a truce with her brother, an errant shot killed her. Young raised his rifle to shoot at a man in the distance, but William Kennedy Senior stopped him, thinking it one of their own men. Moments later the man fired, wounding William Kennedy Junior. His father, a legendary rifleman, immediately felled the Tory. The trapped Loyalists surrendered after a brief fight. Stallions and Andrew Love wept together, and Stallions was paroled to bury his wife.

On a visit to the prison at Ninety-Six Colonel John Thomas Senior's wife Jane overheard Loyalist women discussing a plan to attack a gathering of

Patriot militiamen at Cedar Spring. She rode to warn her son, Colonel John Thomas Junior. That night 60 Patriot militia set out campfires, and hid in thick underbrush nearby. One hundred and fifty Loyalists rushed the camp, only to be cut down by the waiting Patriots. The militiamen were proving all too adept at vicious warfare of ambushes and raids.

Most of the troops killed in the ambush were Tory militiamen of Major Patrick Ferguson's command. The son of a minor Scottish nobleman, Ferguson served from the age of 17 in the Seven Years War (see Essential Histories 6: *The Seven Years War*, Daniel Marston, Osprey Publishing: Oxford, 2001). Ferguson was a distinguished marksman, inventor of a practical breech-loading rifle, and staunch advocate of light infantry. Shot through the elbow at Brandywine (September 11, 1777), his right arm was useless. Considered humane and gentlemanly even by his enemies, he was often at odds with the reckless and cruel Tarleton. Promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel by Cornwallis, he was given responsibility for recruiting Loyalist militia. But since he would be commanding only militia he was reduced back to major.

In the back-country, resistance crystallized around Colonel Thomas Sumter, the "Carolina Gamecock." Self-commissioned as a brigadier, Sumter led an informal brigade in which regiments like the Second Spartans sometimes cooperated, sometimes not. Local leaders often pursued local goals, usually defense of their homes and families.

Ambitious, aggressive, and charismatic, Sumter was not particularly gifted as a tactician. On August 1 he besieged the British stronghold at Rocky Mount, a hilltop position with three sturdy buildings protected by a ditch and abatis. Thwarted at Rocky Mount, Sumter turned his attention to Hanging Rock, a defensive position held by 500 men with two cannon. In Brandon's camp Joseph McJunkin and Mitchell High sat by a fire and slept a bit. When they awoke, High predicted, "This day I shall die."

Sumter planned a complex multi-pronged dawn attack on August 6, but the guides got lost and the Patriot force stumbled into the Loyalist militia camp. Mitchell High went forward without hesitation, and was immediately shot dead. The attack routed the Loyalist militia, and threw some British troops into a panic. One regiment of British Regulars stood firm in a defensive square with the artillery, and nothing could convince the Patriot militia to rush them. After looting the camp the Patriot force withdrew.

The war was also growing more vicious in the lowlands where British raids and foraging parties terrorized the countryside. There the resistance centered on Colonel Frances Marion, the Swamp Fox, who plagued British



The design of the hunting shirt varied considerably. This North Carolina militiaman is armed with a sturdy civilian musket. (Painting by Don Troiani, www.historicalimagebank.com)



At Huck's Defeat (Williamson's Plantation, July 12, 1780) the militia routed Loyalists under the brutal Captain Christian Huck in a dawn surprise attack. The small victory was instrumental in encouraging Patriot recruitment. (Painting by Don Troiani, www.historicalimagebank.com)

lines of supply and communication. Sumter and Marion's accidentally congruent strategies stretched British resources ever thinner.

Ferguson continued his recruiting efforts on sweeps through the back-country, hampered by the threat of Patriot retaliation against the homes and families of Loyalist recruits, and by a shortage of weapons. Patriot militiamen stalked Ferguson's columns, ambushing smaller groups sent out to forage and recruit.

To counter the British Southern Strategy, Congress forced General Washington to dispatch Major-General Horatio Gates, "the hero of Saratoga," to the Carolinas. One Delaware and seven Maryland regiments of Continentals under General "The Baron" Johann DeKalb were among the best of the Continental Line. State troops and militia gathered along the way swelled Gates' force by another 2,900 men. When the call came to join Gates, the militia voted. The Second Spartans, the Little River Regiment, and part of the First Spartans turned westward toward home.

Gates was devious and politically ambitious; he had usurped the credit for Saratoga from Benedict Arnold, and connived to replace Washington. Seeking quick glory, Gates drove his men through the Southern heat, through barren territory with no food. He scorned Marion's skilled scouts because they did not look sufficiently military, but inexplicably sent some of his Continentals and two of his eight cannon to reinforce Sumter on a raid against a British supply convoy. After capturing the convoy Sumter turned toward home with his booty, the artillery, and the Continentals.

On the eve of battle Gates fed his starving men a meal that was too hearty. On the morning of August 16 his men were in no condition to fight. Gates'

tactical deployment was faulty, and the results predictable. The militia broke in the face of a redcoat bayonet charge, most without firing a shot. The fleeing men crashed through the Maryland troops, throwing them into confusion. Gates took one look at the fleeing militia and rode away on his powerful horse, covering 65 miles (104km) without rest.

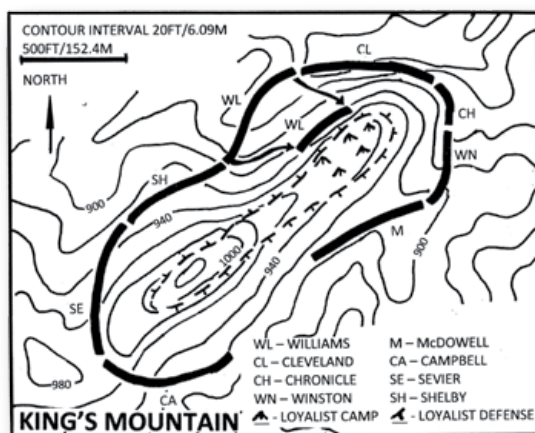
The Continentals stood fast, but were crushed; most disappeared into British prison hulks in Charleston Harbor. (About one-third of all Patriot deaths occurred in prisons.) In the aftermath Tarleton overtook Sumter at Fishing Creek on August 18. Sumter's militia scattered and Sumter (who inexplicably slept through the initial gunfire) escaped partially clothed and riding bareback. Tarleton killed or captured 460 men, and took the two precious cannon and all of Sumter's booty.

Unaware of the Camden debacle, the Second Spartan and Little River Regiments set out to break up a gathering of Loyalists at Musgrove's Mill. Familiar with the local terrain, James Williams, Brandon, Lieutenant-Colonel James Steen, and Major Joseph McJunkin led 200 militiamen on a grueling night ride along obscure trails to surprise the Loyalists on August 19. Local residents reported that the Loyalists had been unexpectedly reinforced by Provincials and militia. Scouts covertly assessed the enemy camp, but clashed with a patrol on the return trip.

Though faced with 500 enemy troops, with their own horses spent the Patriots had no choice but to fight. They moved into position overlooking a field a half-mile from the mill, and threw up a breastwork of fallen logs and underbrush. The British commander, Colonel Alexander Innes, heeded the advice of experienced Captain Abraham DePeyster. As the British advanced down the far side of the river, mounted militiamen under Captain Shadrach Inman attempted to lure them into the chosen ground. The British instead formed a line and advanced to within 150 yards before firing a volley at the defenders. When the Patriots returned fire the Loyalists charged with the bayonet, but the militia did not give way. The left of the Patriot line held the Loyalists at arm's length, but Innes's Provincials forced their way into the breastwork amid hand-to-hand fighting. A rifleman shot Innes from his saddle and shouted, "I've killed their commander!" When the Provincials faltered, the Patriots charged, usually suicidal for men armed with tomahawks and knives against bayonets.

The Provincials were broken, and the Loyalist militia fled for the shelter of the mill. As the Loyalists ran away, one unwisely stopped on the other side of the river to moon his opponents. Brandon asked Golding Tinsley "Can't you turn that arrogant braggart over?" Tinsley shot the Loyalist in his exposed buttocks, and his friends dragged the wounded man away. The next day, as the Patriots prepared to pursue the defeated enemy toward Ninety-Six, a dispatch rider arrived with news of the defeat at Camden. Ferguson pursued the militiamen toward North Carolina, but soon turned back to camp at Fair Forest.

The other bright spot amid a string of Patriot disasters was Marion's attack on a British column at Great Savannah Swamp, where he freed prisoners from the Maryland Brigade taken at Camden. The Patriot cause in the South was at its lowest ebb; a second army of Continental Line had been smashed, and



King's Mountain was a typical frontier battle of encirclement. This map, the authors' reinterpretation of the "classical" map, depicts initial unit dispositions, and the movement of Williams' command, which included Brandon's regiment. Topographic base USGS Grover, NC 7.5-minute Quadrangle. The battle was fought several miles from King's Mountain on the northeastern extension of Brushy Ridge. (Authors)

Sumter's brigade dispersed. More militia regiments disbanded when enlistments expired, or took refuge in North Carolina. Only Marion's guerillas and isolated regiments remained to gnaw at the margins of Cornwallis's army.

Salvation for the Patriot cause came from British strategic confusion. Clinton looked to Cornwallis for a diversion to support his Chesapeake Bay operations, while Cornwallis wanted Clinton to lure Patriot forces away to help him subdue the Carolinas. Cornwallis occupied Charlotte, but the populace, sullen and resistant, failed to provide supplies demanded of them.

KING'S MOUNTAIN

At Gilbert Town in North Carolina Ferguson released a prisoner with a message for the "over mountain" communities in western North Carolina (modern Tennessee) and Virginia. He threatened to cross the mountains, hang the local militia leaders, and lay waste to their communities. It was a catastrophic error in judgment. Then he moved back into South Carolina to recruit and secure the inland flank of Cornwallis's army.

Many of the frontier settlers were descendants of the brutal Scottish border reivers (see *Men-at-Arms 279: The Border Reivers*, Keith Durham, Osprey Publishing: London, 1995), and hardened by decades of fighting Indians. They did not respond well to Ferguson's threat. On September 25 around a thousand men assembled for a march across the mountains to eliminate Ferguson.

Upon learning of the approaching force Ferguson sent dispatches asking for reinforcement, and turned to rendezvous with Cornwallis. The normally benevolent Ferguson issued another inexplicable proclamation, summarizing "let your women turn their backs upon you and look out for the real men to protect them." Meanwhile his pursuers grew in strength, adding North Carolina and South Carolina militia.

A large band of South Carolina and Georgia militiamen assembled at the summons of James Williams, who had been granted a commission to raise militia by the governor of North Carolina.¹ Veteran officers like Brandon and Major Samuel Hammond subordinated themselves to Williams at the September 23 rendezvous.

The Patriot force assembled on grazing land used to gather cattle for market. Thomas Young recorded: "Our party under Cols Williams and Brandon fell in with the Mountain Men under Campbell, Cleveland, and Sevier at a place said to be the Cowpens. They were killing beeves – we received a little of their beef. This was in the afternoon." The beef was confiscated from a local Loyalist.

A decision was made to award overall leadership to Colonel Campbell, but each of the colonels had an equal say in decisions. It was command by committee. Sumter had left for North Carolina to argue his case for supreme command of the South Carolina militia with the governor in exile, and would miss this decisive battle.

1 Historians have generally accepted a strange version of the role of Williams and his followers, including Brandon, set down by 19th-century historian Lyman C. Draper. Draper's account was based on an unpublished account by William Hill, who hated the long-dead Williams. The Hill/Draper account is inconsistent with the behavior of Williams and Brandon, and contradicted by first-person accounts. We would credit a much larger force to Williams. Draper's estimate is absurdly small, and some authors have even placed Brandon with Col. Isaac Shelby's Tennessee militia. We estimate Brandon alone may have commanded over 150 men.



Thomas Young recalled:

We then proceeded onward to the Cherokee Ford on Broad River where the enemy was said to be. We traveled on till late at night; we then lay down to sleep without any attention to orders that I could perceive. When I awoke in the morning Joseph Williams, the little son of Col. Williams was lying at my back. We arose and crossed Broad river at the Cherokee Ford. The Enemy were not there. It soon commenced raining on us. We passed a meeting-house around which the enemy had cut the tops off the chestnut trees to get the fruit.

Death of Major Ferguson at King's Mountain by Alonzo Chappel is quite inaccurate, omitting his distinctive duster and showing him dropping his saber from his paralyzed arm. Also note the incorrect inclusion of blue-coated Continentals at left. (Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University)

On October 6 Ferguson, with about 1,000 local militia and 100 uniformed Provincials, took up a position on a small ridge.² The ground was rocky, and the crest treeless, though the surrounding slopes were covered by large trees and underbrush. Ferguson's main camp was on the northeast end of the ridge, with other troops strung out to the southwest.

Spy Joseph Kerr reported Ferguson's position and an estimate of his numbers. A hasty council selected some 900 of the least-worn men and horses, and at about 8.00pm they began a grueling march through cold rain and pitch darkness. Men wrapped their clothing over weapons to protect them.

On the afternoon of October 7 the rain ceased. Thomas Young recalled: "We came to a field where it was said we were to have some beeves killed. Here we met George Watkins [one of Brandon's men], a Whig who had just been paroled

2 The battle site is actually several miles from King's Mountain, on the northeastern extension of Brushy Ridge in York County, SC.

More fortunate casualties received the attention of a surgeon. This portable surgical kit in the York County (SC) Historical Museum contains a bone saw, shears, forceps, probes, clamps, and scalpels, but little else. A few simple medications were carried in a separate chest. (Authors)



by the Enemy. He gave our officers information that we were within half a mile of Ferguson's party on the top of Kings Mountain, & of their position. Orders were immediately given to tie our blankets behind us, pick & prime."³

Another conference concocted a typical frontier warfare plan to surround the mountain and attack from all quarters. Knowing the Loyalist superiority with the bayonet, one officer instructed his men "stand your ground as long as you can. When you can do no better, get behind trees or retreat: but I beg you not to run quite off. If we are repulsed, let us make a point of returning and renewing the fight." Brandon urged his men to begin with an "Indian halloo" and fight their way up the mountainside as best they could.

Leaving most of the horses behind, the Patriot militia divided into four columns, two to approach each side of the hill. The plan went awry as men struggled over rocky, broken ground so that some units reached their positions well ahead of others. Ferguson's new second in command, Abraham DePeyster, had just checked the pickets around the base of the hill, but many were eliminated without giving warning.

What ensued in the next 50 minutes has been much described but little understood. Separate commands, in dense vegetation and rough ground and

3 Clear the vent with the wire vent pick and add new powder to the primer pan.

E

THE BATTLE OF KING'S MOUNTAIN, OCTOBER 7, 1780

Militiamen of Colonel Thomas Brandon's Second Spartan Regiment fight their way into the main Loyalist camp near the close of the brief battle. Some wear the Patriot recognition symbol – a scrap of white paper – on their hats to distinguish them from similarly clothed Loyalist militia. Others have tucked their hats into their belts to avoid their being knocked off, and they are wearing scarves to confine their long and unkempt hair. In the background, British Major Patrick Ferguson's encircled Loyalist troops are silhouetted against the sky on the top of the barren ridge, and the ground is littered with dead and wounded in the wake of Patriot rushes and Loyalist counterattacks. The decisive battle resulted in about a thousand Tory militia killed or captured, and the defeat dealt a fatal blow to Loyalist militia recruiting critical to the British Southern Strategy. Cornwallis's superior, General Sir Henry Clinton, considered it "the first link in a chain of events ... that ended in the total loss of America."





Mortally wounded at the close of the battle, Colonel James Williams died on the retreat and was hastily buried. Long afterward his remains were located and reinterred beneath this monument in Gaffney, SC. (Authors)

without communications, make any true assessment of the course of battle impossible.

The attack was ragged and uncoordinated. Arriving in position first Colonel Campbell waved his coat and shouted “Here they are boys! Shout like hell and fight like devils!” Sporadic firing broke out when Loyalists spotted Shelby’s men moving through the trees. In response to Campbell’s shouting, an uneasy DePeyster warned Ferguson, “Those are the same yelling devils I fought at Musgrove Mill.”

The Second Spartans were led by Brandon, Lieutenant-Colonel James Steen, and (soon to be Lieutenant-Colonel) William Farr. Men from the companies of Captains Benjamin Jolly, Gabriel Brown, John Thompson, William Young, Hugh Means, John Putman, Daniel Duff, and John Mapp began their attack. William Sharp and William Giles, relatives and lifelong friends, began to make their way up the ridge, firing as they went. While using a log for cover to reload, Sharp saw Giles fall. He grimly fought on, hoping to avenge Giles’ death. After firing a number of shots, Sharp was amazed to see Giles pull himself up off the ground and begin reloading. He had been shot in the neck and momentarily stunned. Together the two men resumed fighting their way up the ridge.

The Patriot units at the northern end of the hill were delayed but the ring was finally closed. Patriot Major Chronicle was killed, but it was not the kind of battle that required leadership. Ferguson was riding to and fro, blowing the silver whistle he used to give commands in the din of battle. A mounted counterattack was stymied when Ferguson’s men, silhouetted against the sky, were shot out of their saddles. A group of Ferguson’s men charged Campbell with bayonets; the Patriots scrambled back down the hillside to the cover of

trees and rocks, and the Loyalists retreated back up the hill. Meanwhile Shelby's men had launched an attack from the opposite side, with similar results. Thomas Young, a private in Jolly's company gave the following account:

Ben Hollingsworth and I took right up the side of the mountain, and fought our way from tree to tree, up to the summit. I recollect I stood behind one tree, and fired until the bark was nearly all knocked off, and my eyes pretty well filled with it. One fellow shaved me pretty close, for his bullet took a piece of my gun-stock. Hollingsworth said, 'It won't do here; we shall be killed'. Some of the bark fell in my eyes, & we got into another place where we could stoop & be safe until we had loaded. I then [rose] and fired with effect. The enemy gave way in that section & we rushed up.

In the confusion Young charged up the hill and suddenly realized he was alone. "I got lost from Hollingsworth, & got between the two parties. I heard our regiment halloo, & looked round & saw our men; about a dozen of them shook hands with me. A little fellow of the name of Cherry gave me a sound scolding for my conduct, & told me to stick to him, or I would be killed. I did stay with him for some time."

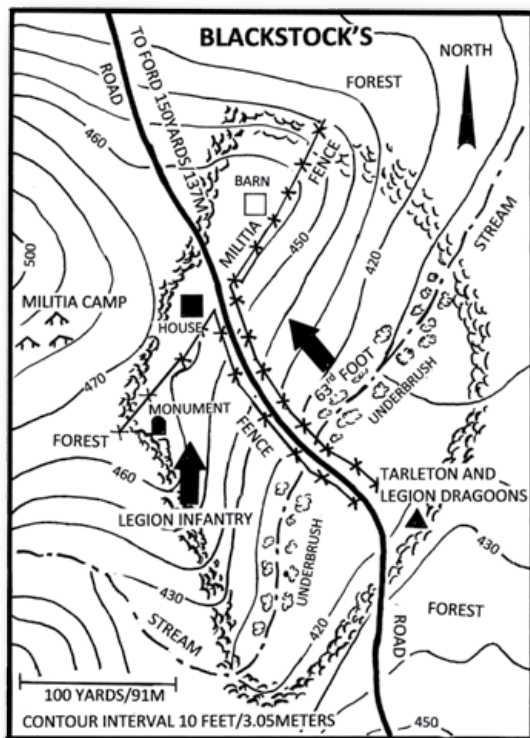
In the to-and-fro battle, some of the Patriots were inevitably caught. Sixteen-year-old Robert Henry of Chronicle's "South Fork Boys" shot the Tory who bayoneted him, but was pinned to the ground under the bleeding Tory with the bayonet through his hand and thigh. Lying below the drifting smoke, he passively observed the ebb and flow of battle until William Caldwell found him. Caldwell had to kick Henry repeatedly to loosen the bayonet.

Thomas Young had relatives on the other side. "Just after we had reached the top of the hill, Matthew [McCrary] saw me." Matthew threw himself into his cousin's arms. He had discarded his own musket for fear he might shoot a member of his family. Thomas told him to fight or get out of his way.

Ferguson's men were silhouetted against the sky, and making the common error of aiming too high when firing down slope. Rebounding after each counterattack, Sevier, Campbell, and Shelby's commands pushed the Loyalists along the crest of the hill toward the northeast, displacing Williams' and McDowell's commands northeastward. Ferguson had not used the baggage wagons to laager his camp, and the Patriots were soon inside. Demoralized Loyalists raised white cloths, but Ferguson slashed them down with his sword.

Ferguson attempted to break out with other mounted officers, but he was a marked man. Local civilians had described a distinctive blue-and-white checked duster he wore to protect his uniform, and in his thick Bavarian accent Lieutenant-Colonel Frederick Hambright had counseled his men to mark the man in the blue checkered coat. Ferguson was shot down, his panicked horse dragging him along the rocks.

The Blackstock's battle site map interpreted from contemporary accounts, battlefield archeology, and lidar imagery. Tarleton sent his dragoons charging up the road between the fences. Monument Hill is the topographic spur at left. Topographic base USGS Cross Anchor, SC 7.5-minute Quadrangle. (Authors)



The Patriots pressed the Loyalists into the camp, and fired at close range. They were wreaking their revenge, shouting “Tarleton’s Quarter” in retribution for murder, rape, and plunder. Colonel Richard Shelby rode between his men and the Loyalists, and screamed “Damn you, if you want quarter throw down your arms!”

The firing died down, but there was one last wave of murder. A Loyalist foraging party had rushed back to the camp. They fired at the Patriots from behind, and fled. In the confusion Williams was shot in the groin.⁴ Thomas Young recounted:

On top of the mountain and in the thickest of the fight I saw Colonel Williams fall, and a braver or a better man never died upon the field of battle ... I ran to his assistance, for I loved him as a father; he had ever been so kind to me, almost always carrying a cake in his pocket for me and his little son, Joseph. They carried him into a tent, and sprinkled some water in his face. As he revived, his first words were, ‘For God’s sake, boys, don’t give up the hill!’ I remember it as well as if it had occurred yesterday. I left him in the arms of his son Daniel, and returned to the field to avenge his fall.

The Patriots thought the shooting came from the surrounded Loyalists. Campbell ordered Williams’ men to fire on the Loyalists, killing another 100 or so.

The victors roamed the battlefield, scavenging weapons and valuables. James Collins found Ferguson and observed, “Seven rifle balls had passed through his body, both his arms were broken, and his hat and clothing were literally shot to pieces.” His body was looted for souvenirs.

At nightfall 119 dead and 123 wounded Loyalists littered the ground, and 664 prisoners were in custody. The exhausted victors, with only 28 killed and 64 wounded, collapsed. Around the sleeping men was a vision of hell. Dying men and horses groaned and screamed. The single surviving surgeon of the four who had accompanied the Loyalists treated the wounded as best he could. Most were treated by their friends. For wounded Loyalists, there was little treatment.

A rumor arose that Tarleton was hurrying forward with a strong force. The next morning the dead were hastily buried in shallow graves or under piles of wood and underbrush. Wagons and tents were burned. Wounded Patriots were mounted on horses, or slung in blanket litters between horses. Hundreds of captured firearms were disabled, and each prisoner was given several to carry. The prisoners began a melancholy march into North Carolina. The over-mountain men left to deal with a rumored threat from the Cherokee.

The prisoner escorts were exhausted, and fearful of Tarleton overtaking the slow-moving column. Thomas Young observed, “After the battle we marched ... with our prisoners where we all came very near to starving to death. The country was very thinly settled, and provisions could not be had for love or money. I thought [of] green pumpkins sliced and fried, about the

4 Several contradictory versions of Williams’ fate exist. The most romantic has Williams and Ferguson wounding each other. A second has Williams shot by the returning Loyalist foraging party. A third, based on Hill and in vogue in the late 20th century, had him shot by vengeful mountaineers for his supposed cowardice and perfidy. The probable truth, given his physical location and the nature of his wound, is the traditional one – he was shot by one of the still-resisting Loyalists.

sweetest eating I ever had in my life.” Escape attempts were common and almost impossible to stop; one man dropped out of the column and hid in a hollow tree. Brandon, in a rage, pulled him out and hacked him to death.

Colonel Campbell argued that some of the prisoners had perpetrated robbery, arson, and murder. A drumhead court sentenced 12 to death. On October 14, nine were hanged. Among the condemned was Billy Pearson, “a most vile Tory.” Colonel Brandon spoke to Pearson, saying “See what your deeds have brought you to?” Pearson begged for mercy. “Save me Brandon. Save me if you will!” Accepting Pearson’s pledge to become a faithful Whig, Brandon interceded to save him from the noose. Why he chose to save Pearson is unknown, but there were Pearsons living in his vicinity, and others under his command. Given that Brandon had likely sent young Matthew McCrary home to his mother (Brandon’s sister), it would have been hard to deny a request for leniency from his men.

The news of King’s Mountain was an enormous boost to the new nation’s morale, acclaimed by George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Sir Henry Clinton wrote that King’s Mountain was “the first link in a chain of events that followed each other in regular succession until they at last ended in the total loss of America.”

BLACKSTOCK’S FARM

By October 12, 1780 Cornwallis was again in pursuit of Sumter. On September 14 the more cooperative Marion had scattered a large Loyalist force at Black Mingo. Cornwallis learned of Sumter’s camp near Fishdam Ford, and dispatched the 63rd Regiment of Foot to eliminate him. Five men were to infiltrate the camp and kill Sumter before the main attack. At about 1.00am on November 9, firing broke out between the British and Sumter’s pickets. Again Sumter slept through the initial gunfire, and fled into the surrounding woods. The Patriots were able to hold their ground, and the badly mauled British withdrew. Sumter then marched deep into South Carolina, where he posed a threat to Ninety-Six, so Cornwallis ordered Tarleton to cease his pursuit of Marion to deal with him.

Tarleton, reinforced by redcoats from the 63rd and 71st Regiments of Foot, was soon hot on Sumter’s trail. Sumter turned back north toward Blackstock’s Ford on the Tyger River. The hard-driving Tarleton was two hours behind by midday on November 20, 1780. Sumter was in a dangerous predicament; if Tarleton caught him trying to cross the river, his force would be cut to pieces. Brandon advised Sumter that Blackstock’s tobacco plantation was a good place to fight.

Blackstock’s farm sat on a ridge above the ford, blocking the road. The road crossed a small, brush-lined creek, and then led straight up the ridge to the house. It was bounded on both sides by a sturdy log fence, with barren fields on both sides after the tobacco harvest. The house and tobacco-drying barn were situated behind a log fence perpendicular to the road, along the military crest of the ridge. Dense forest would prevent Tarleton from flanking the position. Tarleton’s tired troops would have to climb 80 feet (25 meters) of elevation under fire from well-protected riflemen.

Tarleton never hesitated. Pickets, including men from Brandon’s regiment, fired at the British, and then scampered back up the ridge. Tarleton dismounted his mounted infantry, and went straight up the ridge before his lagging infantry and artillery could arrive. The Patriots fired too soon, and



A log fence and sturdy log buildings, like this replica, provided protected firing positions for the militia at Blackstock's. Dense woodland prevented the Loyalists from flanking the position. (Authors)

Major John Money's veteran 63rd Foot charged with the bayonet. Men sheltered behind the log structures fired again with devastating effect. Money, two of his lieutenants, and about a third of the ranks were killed or wounded. Tarleton laid the blame on Money and his men, saying the "ardor of the 63d had carried them too far."

Tarleton, as rash as ever, ordered his dragoons to charge up the narrow lane, straight into the rifle fire. Tarleton recorded: "the cavalry soon reached the houses and broke the Americans, who from that instant began to disperse." In reality the narrow lane was clogged with dead and wounded men and horses as the dragoons struggled to retreat over the bodies of their comrades. Only the discipline of the red-coated infantry allowed any to survive.

Sumter rode out to observe the retreat, and a section from the 63rd turned and fired a parting volley. A lucky shot at long range sent buckshot tearing into Sumter. Second Spartan Captain Gabriel Brown was killed. With blood running down his back, Sumter instructed a companion to conceal his plight from the men.

Interestingly, the militiamen did not think much of the battle. Abel Kendrick remembered that they "had a slight skirmish or engagement with the British." Lewis Turner said only "we had the misfortune to get our general wounded." Turner had fought his last battle; the remainder of his service would be spent patrolling the countryside suppressing Tories. Kendrick would fight again at Eutaw Springs.

Tarleton retreated to lick his wounds; in the morning he would renew the attack. The new Patriot commander, Colonel John Twiggs of the Georgia militia, had the British wounded carried into the house. A rearguard stoked large campfires as the Patriots slipped across the ford to safety.



Tarleton returned to an empty battlefield, and as usual made the best of things. He reported a great victory to Cornwallis. His losses are difficult to assess because he lied shamelessly in his letter. He had likely lost over 90 killed and 170 wounded as opposed to seven casualties for the Patriots. Tarleton pursued Sumter for three days, indiscriminately punishing local Patriots and Loyalists alike, even hanging a man who had taken British protection. He burned the farm of William Hodge, a member of the Second Spartans, slaughtered the livestock, and carried Hodge off, promising to “hang him at the first crooked tree.” Hodge was not hanged, but sent to prison at Ninety-Six. Tarleton rode back to meet Cornwallis with 50 prisoners, random men scooped up along the march.

The egotistical and irascible Sumter was out of action for months. He had kept the fires of the revolution alive during its darkest hours, but now the cause needed militia leaders who would cooperate with a superior. Congress had allowed George Washington to choose Gates’ replacement; he chose Nathaniel Greene, who assumed command of the Southern Department. In Charlotte, Greene found a dispirited, ill-disciplined, “literally naked,” and starving army that supplied itself by plundering. The militia would have to buy him time to rebuild the army. Greene wanted to work with Sumter, but was under no illusions that Sumter would cooperate except as it suited him. Greene visited Sumter at his home, where Sumter lectured him on strategy, urging an immediate confrontation with Cornwallis. But Greene needed space and time to rebuild and most of all feed his army. To accomplish this, Greene violated a fundamental military tenet; in the face of the enemy, he divided his army.

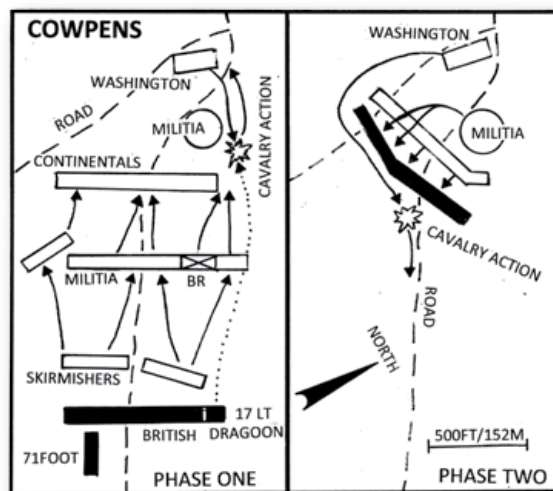
COWPENS

Greene took half his army south to threaten Camden and Charleston. The light troops – 320 Maryland Continentals, 200 veteran Virginia militia, and 80 Continental dragoons under William Washington – went with General Daniel Morgan to the west from where they could threaten Ninety-Six. Brandon joined Andrew Pickens, once a brigadier in the State Troops, but now a militia colonel in Morgan’s command.

If Cornwallis pursued either Greene or Morgan, he gave the other free rein to attack a

The site of the Loyalist charge at Blackstock’s is now forested, but Tarleton sent his troops up a slope and into an open bowl-shaped “killing ground” very much like this one immediately adjacent. (Authors)

Movements of the Second Spartan Regiment and members of the regiment attached to Colonel Washington’s cavalry at the battle of Cowpens. The unit movements were complex, and these maps depict only two crucial stages. Modified and reinterpreted from Lawrence Babits’ *A Devil of a Whipping*. BR = Brandon’s regiment. The Patriot cavalry clashed with the 17th Light Dragoons who pursued the withdrawing militia, and again with Tarleton’s Loyalist dragoons at the close of the battle. (Authors)





Brigadier-General Daniel Morgan from a portrait by Alonzo Chappel. "The Old Waggoner" habitually wore hunting garb even when commanding Continentals. (NARA)

strategic objective. So he split his army. He would move south to link up with 1,500 replacements marching from Charleston. Tarleton – with the British Legion (300 dragoons and 250 infantry), the 1st Battalion of the 71st Regiment, the 17th Light Dragoons, two grasshopper guns, and militia – set off after Morgan.

On December 27 Morgan sent Washington's dragoons to eliminate a Loyalist band plaguing settlements as far north as Brandon's Fair Forest area. Washington eliminated the much larger force, and then raided near Ninety-Six, alarming Cornwallis even more. Morgan withdrew north, and Tarleton pursued but could not cross the flooded Tyger and Enoree rivers. To the south newly-arrived Lieutenant-Colonel "Light Horse Harry" Lee's elite cavalry joined Marion in harassing Cornwallis.

The flooded rivers subsided, and by the morning of January 16, 1781 Tarleton was within six miles (10km) of catching Morgan. If Morgan risked a retreat toward the crossings of the Broad River, Tarleton would almost certainly catch him on the march. If he did cross successfully, "one half of my militia would immediately have abandoned me." He decided to fight at the Cowpens. Morgan listened carefully to officers who had contended with Tarleton, gaining an understanding of his enemy.

The militia was eager to settle scores with Tarleton. Reinforcements straggled in all night. Morgan, Brandon, and others roamed the camp, reassuring the men. Thomas Young recalled that "[Morgan] was going among the soldiers, telling them that the 'Old Wagoner' would crack his whip over Ben [Tarleton] as sure as he lived ... I don't think he slept a wink that night." Despite his fearsome reputation, Brandon was also solicitous of his men's welfare.

Morgan planned what would today be called a defense in depth. He deduced that Tarleton would come straight up the middle, guiding on a crude road. Riflemen of the Georgia and North Carolina militia were deployed as skirmishers well forward of the main defense. Morgan gave specific orders for the skirmishers to fire only twice, marking enemy leaders, then fall back in good order.

F

THE BATTLE OF BLACKSTOCK'S FARM, NOVEMBER 20, 1780

British Lieutenant-Colonel Banastre Tarleton overtook self-styled Brigadier Thomas Sumter's militia brigade at Blackstock's tobacco farm near a ford of the Tyger River. Colonel Thomas Brandon chose the site for its defensive potential. Tarleton first sent his mounted infantry (fighting on foot) into an uphill attack against militia positioned behind log fences and in sturdy log buildings. When the infantrymen were bloodily repulsed, Tarleton sent his "green dragoons" charging up a narrow, fence-bordered lane into heavy fire, with more casualties. Though driven off, and with casualties 20 times those of his foes, Tarleton lied flagrantly, reporting a great victory to Cornwallis. The victory was another great boost to Patriot morale, demonstrating that the seemingly invincible "Bloody Ban" could be defeated – and badly.





Most artworks, like this engraving by S.H. Gimber, depict Colonel William Washington's romantic but relatively insignificant cavalry clash with Tarleton's dragoons at the close of the battle. (NARA)

At dawn on January 17, 1781 Tarleton's troops were still partially strung out along the forest road, but he launched his attack anyway. Predictably, he arrayed his units in a single line, with the infantry in the center guiding along the road; his grasshopper guns would move along the roadsides. The dragoons were posted on the flanks. The 71st Foot (Fraser's Highlanders) would arrive late. His favored dragoons of the British Legion were held back to slaughter the enemy when they broke and ran.

The skirmishers sent two ragged volleys into the British, then dribbled back and took up positions with Pickens' militiamen in the second line.

To the rear, invisible to the British, lay Morgan's reserve – Washington's 80 dragoons, and 45 militiamen selected to serve as dragoons under Lieutenant-Colonel James McCall and Major Benjamin Jolly. The morning was bitterly cold, and Thomas Young recalled, "We were formed in order of battle, and the men were slapping their hands together to keep warm – an exertion not long necessary."

In each militia regiment 11 marksmen were chosen to stand ahead of the main militia line; Lieutenant-Colonel William Farr, Major Joseph McJunkin, and John Savage were among the Spartans chosen. Farr nodded approval, John Savage fired, and the first of many British officers fell. The marksmen withdrew into the militia ranks.

Thomas Young noted, "the British line advanced at a sort of trot, with a loud halloo. It was the most beautiful line I ever saw. When they shouted, I heard Morgan say, 'They give us the British halloo, boys, give *them* the Indian halloo, by G--' ... Every officer was crying don't fire! for it was a hard matter for us to keep from it."

Morgan made it very clear that the militia were to hold until the enemy closed to within 50 paces, fire two volleys, and then withdraw to where their

horses were tied at a rally point behind the main line of Continentals. This was a critical part of Morgan's plan; fleeing militia inevitably prompted a bayonet charge that disrupted the fabled British unit cohesion. The risk was that his militiamen would keep on going. The British continued their relentless advance. The first volley from 450 rifles and muskets tore into their line. Then a second volley staggered the veteran infantry, and the advance faltered as officers and NCOs went down by the dozen.

The hesitation allowed Pickens' men to begin withdrawing in good order. The units most at risk were Brandon and Hammond's regiments, who were to withdraw across open ground to the Patriot left. Tarleton launched 50 of his light dragoons to run them down, and some of the British infantry joined the chase. Militiamen began to panic and run.

Lieutenant Joseph Hughes, 20 years old and notably fleet of foot, ran a desperate footrace, getting to the front and turning to shame the militiamen into resisting. On his third try Hughes succeeded; the men turned, and began firing at the British dragoons. Thomas Brandon often said, "Joseph Hughes saved the fate of the day at the Cowpens."

Two dragoons chased Hughes, and he darted around a tree with the dragoons in pursuit. John Savage shot one of the dragoons; Hughes clouted the other one with the butt of his weapon.

Brandon rode hard to the rear, waving his sword to attract Washington's attention. The Patriot dragoons charged into the melee and routed the British dragoons. A quarter-hour into the battle Tarleton's improvisation was falling apart.

The third, and main, line of resistance was the Continentals, flanked by veteran Virginia militia and a small contingent of Georgia militia, all under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel John Eager Howard, a veteran Continental. The British infantry continued its relentless advance, but at fifty paces Howard's line fired a massive volley, then a second. The British line staggered to a stop. The two lines exchanged withering volleys at near point-blank range, but the Patriots never faltered.

The 71st Foot was now deployed, so Tarleton sent them to turn the Patriot right flank. Seeing the route the Highlanders were taking, Howard realized he had to refuse his right flank. The Virginia militiamen misinterpreted the order as a retreat and began to move back in disarray.

Steadying the militia, Howard bent his line back at 45 degrees and further onto the back slope of the low rise. The Virginia militia turned, and when the charging Highlanders crested the rise they were met with a stunning volley from two regiments. The Highlanders lurched to a stop.

In the center the fire from Howard's Continentals was taking its toll. Howard ordered "fix bayonets," and charged. Pickens' reassembled militia joined the charge on the right. Washington's cavalry circled around the Patriot right and struck the rear of the Highlanders, ruthlessly slashing down the disorganized enemy. Brandon accompanied the cavalry, and other militiamen mounted their horses and joined in. Seeing his nephew Thomas Young struggling against a British dragoon, Brandon rode up between them, killed the dragoon and shouted, "Get behind me, boy!" Young saw him kill two more dragoons, beheading one, before he lost him in the chaos.

For the stunned and exhausted British light infantry and the Scots, it was the end. Many threw down their arms. Others lay down to avoid the intense fire. It was surrender from the ranks upward. In desperation Tarleton sent

his Legion dragoons to help McArthur's Highlanders. Most were cut down or turned in disarray. Trapped, McArthur was forced to surrender some of Cornwallis' best troops.

Tarleton fled the scene with his dragoons. Washington pursued, but a brief clash of the cavalry was inconclusive. The victory was stunning. The Patriots had suffered 12 killed and 61 wounded. Unlike the Romans at Cannae, the Americans did not annihilate their encircled foes, but the British had lost 110 killed and 830 captured. Major McArthur complained to Morgan, "the best troops in the service had been put under that boy [Tarleton] to be sacrificed".

Victorious rebels scoured the roads for the lucrative British baggage trains, and one party under Major Jolly captured a British paymaster's packet laden with gold. Jolly sent Thomas Young to carry the packet to the main column, but he was wounded and taken prisoner. "Tarleton sent for me, and I rode by his side for several miles." Tarleton interrogated Young, who spun yarns of Morgan's strength. "He asked me how many dragoons Washington had. I replied that 'he had seventy, and two volunteer companies of mounted militia – but you know they won't fight.' 'By G-d!' he quickly replied, 'they did to-day, though!'"

Young and another youngster contrived to escape and made their way to friendly civilians, who dressed Young's wounds. Young put on "a fine ruffled shirt" and went to bed. He had taken part in the most remarkable battle of the Revolution, and survived his seventeenth birthday.

Cowpens did not end the savage partisan conflict. After a relatively quiet period a hundred Loyalist militiamen surrounded a house near Fair Forest Creek sheltering a small Second Spartan detachment. Lieutenant John Jolly was killed, four surrendered after a day-long fight, but three escaped. It had been a bitter war for Second Spartan Lieutenant Joseph Hughes. His father was murdered while tending his livestock, and his uncle John Jolly was dead. Another uncle, Richard Hughes Senior, and his son were captured; both died in the prison at Ninety-Six, where the prisoners subsisted on leftover horse feed.

On March 2, 1781 an attempt to capture a Loyalist fort near Mud Lick Creek miscarried. Major Joseph McJunkin, sent by Brandon with a detachment of men, arrived too late to help. On the return trip they stopped at an unfamiliar cabin, and did not see Loyalists lurking in the darkness. The Loyalists raised their weapons, but Captain John Lawson fired first, killing one.

G

THE BATTLE OF COWPENS, JANUARY 17, 1781

Often called "the American Cannae" and "the most perfect battle ever fought in the Americas," Cowpens was one of the decisive battles of the war. Patriot commander Daniel Morgan carefully analyzed British commander Banastre Tarleton's past actions, and devised an unusual defense-in-depth. Tarleton recklessly attacked before his troops were fully deployed. As Morgan expected, upon seeing the militia withdrawing Tarleton launched a charge that disrupted British unit cohesion. The British were then confronted with a third defensive line of disciplined Continentals, who decimated the British infantry with point-blank volleys of musket fire. In the final phase of the battle, Morgan's Continentals and militia fighting on foot counterattacked the British infantry. Patriot dragoons, along with mounted militia who Tarleton thought had fled the field, circled behind the Patriot line and unexpectedly attacked the British light infantry and Fraser's Highlanders from the left flank and rear. The British infantry surrendered en masse, and a major part of Cornwallis's army – including many of his best red-coated Regulars – was lost. Major McArthur of the Highlanders complained bitterly, "the best troops in the service had been put under that boy [Tarleton] to be sacrificed".



The powder in McJunkin's weapon did not fully fire; the ball lodged in the barrel, but the muzzle flash set one Loyalist's shirt afire. He fled with McJunkin following the flaming shirt. The man turned and fired a pistol at McJunkin, shattering his right elbow. Grabbing his sword with his left hand, McJunkin slashed the man to death. McJunkin was carried back to Fair Forest, but Brandon had lost Jolly and McJunkin, two of his ablest officers.

Cornwallis was still fixated upon destroying Greene. In the "race to the Dan" Greene outmarched and outmaneuvered Cornwallis, escaping across the flooded Dan River into Virginia. Cornwallis tried to rebuild his army, but defeats had ended the desire of local Loyalists to enlist.

On March 14, 1781 Greene at last confronted Cornwallis. In a horrific day-long battle at Guilford Courthouse, North Carolina (see Campaign 109: *Guilford Courthouse 1781*, Angus Konstam, Osprey Publishing: Oxford, 2002) Greene was defeated, but at the cost of much of Cornwallis's remaining army.

Undaunted, Greene attempted to draw Cornwallis back into South Carolina. When that failed, he set about eliminating the British outposts. By mid-May the British had lost seven of their outposts, and evacuated their base at Camden.

Sumter, now recuperated, was more lavishly equipped than most of the partisans. On May 12 a large force, including Captain Samuel Otterson's company, used a six-pounder cannon to breach the walls of a garrisoned brick house, capturing 70 of Cornwallis's precious redcoat Regulars.

At Ninety-Six the defenses had been improved, but the key position remained the earthen star fort. Lord Rawdon, the commander in Charleston, ordered Ninety-Six abandoned, but Pickens' men intercepted the communiqué. On May 21 Greene surrounded Ninety-Six.

Six companies from Brandon's regiment joined the force bottling up the larger garrison. A siege followed, with saps and approaches, tunnels, and a 40-foot-tall Maham Tower. The tower was soon abandoned, but William Kennedy Senior and Thomas Young volunteered to mount the tower and snipe at men sent down to the stream that provided the fort's water. They picked off two water carriers, causing consternation in the garrison. The Loyalists resorted to sending slaves at night to bring back one pail of water at a time.

On June 11 Greene learned that Rawdon was marching toward Ninety-Six, and redoubled his efforts. On June 18 an assault against the star fort was driven back with heavy loss. The garrison commander declined Greene's offer of a truce to recover the dead and wounded, and Greene broke off the siege. Rawdon arrived on June 21 but could not overtake the retreating Greene in the summer heat. On July 8 the British abandoned Ninety-Six, and other posts were abandoned as they retreated toward Charleston.

As Greene, Marion, and Sumter eliminated the outposts, the militia fought vicious skirmishes with roving bands of Loyalists, and Thomas Young accompanied Brandon on one expedition to Mud Lick Creek. Major Benjamin Jolly was dispatched to secure a ford to keep the Loyalists from crossing back over. Young spotted his cousin, Loyalist William Young, on the opposite bank. "A good deal was said to keep us engaged. Young waved his sword to me several times and holloed to me to go away; a moment after we were fired upon by a party who crept up the creek through the bushes ... We returned the fire, but did no damage."



On another mission Brandon's militia attacked a Loyalist band hiding on Sandy Run Creek. In the fight Young took Tory Tom Moore prisoner. "When I took him back Tom Salter wanted to kill him, because Moore had once had him prisoner, and would in all probability have killed him, if he had not escaped. I cocked my gun and told them no! He was my man, and I would shoot the first one who harmed him."

Greene harassed the British to prevent troops in South Carolina from moving north to reinforce Cornwallis at Yorktown (see Campaign 47: *Yorktown 1781*, Brendan Morrissey, Osprey Publishing: London, 1997). In late August Greene pursued the retreating British with every man he could scrape together; Brandon led five companies of his regiment.

On the morning of September 8 Greene surprised a British foraging party, dispersing the cavalry escort and capturing most of the infantry. British Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Stuart organized a hasty defense across the main road west of Eutaw Springs. Greene deployed his militia in the first line, with Continentals behind. Brandon's regiment was on the extreme left flank, moving through low ground close to the Santee River.

Greene recounted: "The militia advanced with alacrity" and the fighting became intense. The militia exchanged volleys with the enemy as "The fire ran from flank to flank." Their ammunition exhausted, the center of the Patriot line caved under a bayonet attack, but fell back in good order. Continentals intervened and pushed the enemy back against Eutaw Creek.

Greene's army fell apart when the troops captured a supply of British rum. Seeing victory slip away, Greene ordered a general retreat. Stuart held the field, but the next day withdrew into Charleston. Henceforth, only foraging parties would venture out, though Charleston remained the base for Loyalist raids of murder and wanton destruction by the likes of Colonel "Bloody Bill" Cunningham.

The cost and political unpopularity in Britain did more to end the war than American victories. This British opposition political cartoon (1782) deplored both the cost and the use of Indian allies (fancifully depicted as tropical cannibals). (NARA)



Colonel Thomas Brandon went on to serve as a legislator and civil judge. He died in 1802 and, with others of his regiment, is buried in Old Union Cemetery near Union, SC. (Authors)

Eutaw Springs ended formal warfare in the South, but war with the Cherokee still simmered. Loyalists who fled west into the mountains encouraged the Cherokee to raid frontier settlements. In the spring of 1782 Pickens' brigade was sent to eliminate the threat; the brigade included Captain George Aubrey's company from Brandon's regiment.

The militia spent the summer of 1782 rebuilding their devastated communities, and on September 16 launched a better-organized campaign against the Cherokee. The size of the force was limited by a shortage of ammunition; Pickens recorded: "I had not more than five or six rounds of ammunition for each man." To end the cycle of raids and retributions, Pickens ordered "no Indian woman, child, or old man, or any unfit to bear arms should be put to death on pain of death on the perpetrator."

Abel Kendrick reported: "In 1782 I was drafted for a three months tour against the Cher[o]kee Indians, was under the command of Lieutenant Henley and [Lt.]Col. [Benjamin] Kilgore; at the end of said tour which was spent in marching from one Indian town to another. I returned home after suffering with hunger and fatigue excessively." Again Kendrick's terse prose made light of a brutal mountain campaign where

men died of exhaustion. The expedition marched through a vast tract of rugged mountains, and burned at least 13 towns.

Pickens released prisoners with a message. He would grant two days for the Cherokee to release all prisoners, after which he would "destroy as many of their towns and as much of their provisions as possible and if they wished to fight, they knew where to find me." Chief Terrapin met with Pickens, agreed to turn over the main Tory agitator, and surrendered six others as down payment. On October 17 a delegation of 12 chiefs met with Pickens and agreed to a truce.

On September 3 the Treaty of Paris officially ended the war between England and the new United States of America. On November 1, 1783 the Cherokee and Creeks signed the Treaty of Long Swamp. America's "first civil war" had at long last ended.

THE SOUTHERN CAMPAIGN IN HISTORY

The Southern Campaign would shape future American history in many ways. Some militia leaders like Thomas Sumter would rise to national political office. Most, like Thomas Brandon, resumed their peacetime pursuits; Brandon became an affluent planter and Justice of the Peace (a regional magistrate adjudicating civil and petty criminal law). Others like Abel Kendrick and Lewis Turner moved west of the Appalachian Mountains to

claim veterans' land grants and carve farms and communities out of the wilderness, some moving as far as Louisiana and Texas. Younger men like future President Andrew Jackson fought with the militia again in the Red Stick War and War of 1812 (see Warrior 129, *Frontier Militiaman in the War of 1812*, Ed Gilbert, Osprey Publishing: Oxford, 2008 and Campaign 28, *New Orleans 1815*, Tim Pickles, Osprey Publishing: London, 1994). Their restless, independent-minded, and usually fractious Scots-Irish culture would come to dominate mainstream American politics and culture, as described in Senator James Webb's book *Born Fighting*.

Once widely acknowledged by American and British historians, the significance of the Southern Campaign was "written out" of mainstream American history after South Carolina led the parade of secessionist states in 1861. A recent 400-page history of the War of Independence devoted three pages to the war in the South; King's Mountain and Cowpens were mentioned in sidebars. In popular American history the war was fought in the northern colonies until Cornwallis inexplicably found himself at Yorktown. An older generation of Americans may recall the Southern Campaign only from the 1959–61 Disney miniseries *Swamp Fox*. A younger generation derives its knowledge from the 2000 Hollywood mash-up *The Patriot*. The self-taught citizen-soldiers who thwarted the most professional army in the world deserve far better.

MUSEUMS, RE-ENACTMENTS, AND COMMEMORATIVE PARKS

Many major battle sites are at least partially protected as National Military Parks. The Tory stronghold at Ninety-Six is preserved as an archeological site. King's Mountain is preserved in its entirety in a heavily forested rural area, and King's Mountain State Park, on the same road, preserves buildings including the 1770 Dickey–Sherer home.

Guilford Courthouse National Military Park is readily accessible in the suburbs of Greensboro, NC. Five miles (8km) north of the city of Camden, SC, the Camden battlefield site is still largely undeveloped, and listed on the National Register of Historic Sites. The Overmountain Victory Trail is a series of sites in four states that traces the paths traveled by Tennessee, Virginia, and North Carolina units en route to King's Mountain. Most of these parks are clearly marked on highway maps, with prominent direction signs on local highways. Directions and much other information can be found at www.nps.gov.



Many battle sites have clearly marked "battlefield trails." This marker at Blackstock's sits on Monument Hill, a small knob near the right center of the Patriot defense. (Authors)

The Blackstock's Farm battle site is undeveloped, but protected by the State of South Carolina. To visit this site, go east on State Highway 49 from the town of Cross Anchor, and turn left onto Blackstock Road, then right onto unpaved Monument Road. (Battlefield Road actually leads to the other side of a small tributary of the Tyger River.) The last segment of the road approximately follows the military crest, and a stone marker on a knoll marks the right end of the Patriot line. A sketch map is available at <http://www.sctrails.net/trails/alltrails/palmetto%20trail/BlackstockPassage.html>.

Transportation departments in all states have placed roadside historical markers, and these help to locate travel routes, major campsites, and the sites of the many smaller battles and skirmishes.

The National Park Service holds an extensive collection of artifacts from the colonial and War of Independence eras; many of these are on display at the interpretive centers of the King's Mountain, Cowpens, and Guilford Courthouse National Military Parks. Lesser numbers of period artifacts remain in private hands or in the collections of smaller museums and institutions. Most sites have been heavily explored and excavated, but the visitor is warned that it is illegal to remove artifacts from state or federal properties.

Some local parks and museums of potential interest include the Cherokee County History and Arts Museum in Gaffney, SC (<http://www.cherokeecountyhistory.org/>). The gravesite of James Williams and a restored period cabin are also in Gaffney. The York County Historical Museums include the Southern Revolutionary War Institute in York, SC, and a restored plantation at Historic Brattonsville, SC, site of Huck's Defeat. Both are described in detail at <http://chmuseums.org/>.

The Inn of the Patriots, a bed and breakfast in nearby Grover, NC (<http://www.theinnofthepatriots.com/>), displays period artifacts and replicas as well as carefully researched portraits of Patriot leaders and militiamen by local artist Thomas K. Pauley. The proprietor is well connected to the local re-enactor community. Most re-enactor activities take place on dates commemorating the battles of Cowpens (mid-January) and King's Mountain (early October). Dates vary from year to year; exact dates and additional information can be obtained from the websites previously mentioned.

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GLOSSARY

Abatis	A tangle of felled trees, often with sharpened branches, intended to slow an assault.
Dragoon	Originally mounted infantry, the term had evolved to mean light cavalry.
Hessian	German troops, primarily from Hesse. They were not actually mercenaries; the German prince received payment from the British, but the troops received only meager German salaries.
Maham Tower	A log tower that allowed sharpshooters to fire into a besieged position; after Colonel Hezekiah Maham of the South Carolina militia.
Military crest	The highest point on a hill or ridge from which the lower slopes can be observed. Forward-slope defenses are placed on the military crest, not the topographic crest.
Tory	A Crown Loyalist. Not to be confused with either the early or modern Tory political parties.
Whig	Scottish Presbyterian rebels. By the late 1700s the term was applied to those opposing the conservative British Prime Minister Lord Patrick North. Colonial activists adopted the name, later calling themselves Patriots.

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First published in Great Britain in 2015 by Osprey Publishing,
PO Box 883, Oxford, OX1 9PL, UK
PO Box 3985, New York, NY 10185-3985, USA
E-mail: info@ospreypublishing.com

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ISBN: 978 1 4728 0754 0
E-book ISBN: 978 1 4728 0756 4

Editorial by Ilios Publishing Ltd, Oxford, UK (www.iliospublishing.com)
Index by Sandra Shotter
Typeset in Myriad Pro and Sabon
Artwork by Steve Noon
Originated by PDQ Media, UK

www.ospreypublishing.com

DEDICATION

For our parents and ancestors Oscar E. Gilbert Senior (Colonel Thomas Brandon), Elsie Kendrick Gilbert (Privates Abel Kendrick and Lewis Turner), James D. Rittmann Senior (Colonel George Dashiell, Somerset County Militia, Maryland; Private William Mardis, 11th Virginia Regiment and Virginia Militia; and Private Robert Marshall, 6th Regiment Maryland Line), and Sarah Wintter Rittmann Ponder (Lieutenant Richard Hodges Junior, Upper 96th Regiment, South Carolina Militia).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the cooperation of Marti Mangiello and the staff of Inn of the Patriots, Grover, NC; Michael Scoggins, Southern Revolutionary War Institute, York, SC; Bobby Gilmer Moss, Professor Emeritus, Limestone College, Gaffney, SC; Charles Baxley, Southern Campaign website; re-enactors Bob McCann, Robert Ryals, Ricky Roberts and others; Joe Epley; Kara Newcomer of the US Marine Corps History Division; and Elizabeth Gilbert-Hillier for research in the British National Archives. Archival resources were provided by the Fondren Library of Rice University, Houston, TX; the Houston Texas Public Library, particularly the Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research; and the National Archives I, the Library of Congress, and the Daughters of the American Revolution Library in Washington, DC. Imagery was provided by Military and Historical Image Bank; the National Archives II, College Park, MD (NARA); the Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library, Providence, RI; the American Revolutionary War Living History Association, Grover, NC; the US Marine Corps History Division MCB Quantico, VA (USMCHD); and the British National Archives.

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